The Spiritual Song of Lodro Thaye



Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche



His Eminence
the fourth Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche,
Lodro Chokyi Nyima

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the third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche,
Karma Lodro Chokyi Senge

The Spiritual Song of Lodro Thaye

by
JAMGON KONGTRUL, THE GREAT

Commentary by
KHABJE KHENCHEN THRANGU RINPOCHE

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Cover photo. Thangka of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye from a collection of the Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang, currently displayed at the Rigpe Dorje Institute at Pullahari Monastery.

Photo of the fourth Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche courtesy of Sangye.

May this supreme, peerless teaching,
The precious treasure of the Victorious Ones,
Spread and extend throughout the world
Like the sun shining in the sky.

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Note

Tibetan words are given as they are pronounced, not spelled in Tibetan. Their actual spelling can be found in the Glossary of Tibetan words.

We use the convention of using B.C.E. (Before Common Era) for "B. C." and C.E. (Common Era) for "A. D."

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Foreword

VEN. CHOJE LAMA SHEDRUP

THE KAGYU LINEAGE IS COMMONLY known as the practice lineage, as it is practice above all else that is emphasized. However, practice can only proceed correctly if one has a correct understanding of the view. The path and view of the Kagyu lineage is Mahamudra, which is the very essence and pith of all the teachings of Lord Buddha.

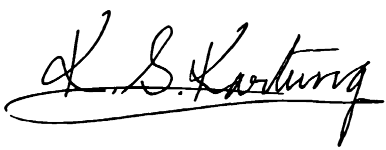
What Mahamudra view refers to is the inseparability of all phenomena and emptiness; the radiant display of mind. Realization of Mahamudra will bring about the ultimate benefit for oneself—freedom from samsara and ultimate happiness—and the development of all the qualities of one's potential, which is the ultimate benefit for others.

Therefore what is most prized is the direct teachings that point out this view and the instructions that explain the path or means to realize it. Such instructions often come in the form of spiritual songs or dohas spontaneously composed by great siddhas who have realized Mahamudra, such as this doha from Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye.

Generally, in order to fully understand dohas an explanation or detailed commentary is required. A correct transmission and explanation can only come about from a being who has practiced and fully realized the meaning of such teachings. Such a being is Khabje Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, a holder of the Kagyu lineage, who through his great compassion and wisdom has blessed us with this detailed line by line commentary.

Although teachings on Mahamudra are often very pithy they are exactly what has been recommended and taught as most appropriate for people in these modern and often busy times, because they can be practiced by anyone in any circumstances.

Therefore I pray that whoever reads these teachings is able to take them to heart and realize Mahamudra. May this merit be a cause for the long life and teachings of the great masters to flourish and remain for many eons benefiting limitless sentient beings.



Choje Lama Shedrup
Palpung Thubten Chokyi Ghatsal
28 March 2008

Preface

Clark Johnson, Ph. D.

Two thousand five hundred years ago the Buddha began delivering a remarkable set of teachings. He taught that instead of relying on a god, one can attain true, permanent happiness by simply examining and working with one's own mind. This message is as true today as it was then; we are engulfed by materialism in our modern world, yet we are not any more happy or secure. The root of this unhappiness is that our mind keeps looking outside ourselves and grasping at external things trying to achieve some measure of happiness. This, however, is futile because to achieve any measure of mental stability or happiness, we must look inward. The Buddha taught looking inward is done through meditation.

The fundamental meditation that is common to all schools of Buddhism is Shamatha and Vipashyana meditation. Thrangu Rinpoche has given extensive teachings on this form of meditation in his *The Practice of Tranquility and Insight.*

There is another major kind of meditation which is fairly specific to the Vajrayana school of Buddhism and this is Mahamudra meditation. The Vajrayana branch of Buddhism was preserved in Northern India and was brought to Tibet in the eighth through twelfth centuries C. E. by a series of remarkable Tibetan translators. Instead of spending eons accumulating virtue and lifetimes studying the sutras, this meditation of Mahamudra involves examining the

mind itself in what is called "looking directly at the mind." While this is a deceptively simple idea, it is an extremely complex and advanced form of meditation which requires years of working on developing an extraordinary clear and stable mind. This stability and clarity is developed through extensive Shamatha and Vipashyana practice. So we must realize that Mahamudra meditation and Shamatha and Vipashyana practice are inter-linked and complement each other.

We may ask who has practiced this Mahamudra meditation? The answer is that it was most extensively practiced by a large number of ordinary and extraordinary people in India in the second through twelfth century. Some of these individuals' stories have been recorded under the title of *The Eighty-four Mahasiddhas* which may be found in Keith Dowman's *Masters of Mahamudra.* These mahasiddhas were cobblers, weavers, arrow makers and even pimps and kings who carried on their ordinary daily activities while they simultaneously practiced Mahamudra meditation and achieved complete enlightenment in one lifetime. What is so relevant to our age is that in the West most Buddhist practitioners lead very busy and demanding lives and do not have long periods to devote to Shamatha and Vipashyana meditation, but they can practice Mahamudra meditation while they are making a living and raising a family.

Mahamudra meditation has been practiced in Tibet since the twelfth century and particularly by the Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism and has allowed thousands of individual meditators to reach enlightenment. This meditation of looking at the mind as-it-is has also been practiced by Nyingma practitioners in the form of Dzogchen meditation with equal results. Those wanting to know more about Mahamudra meditation can consult Thrangu Rinpoche's book, *Essentials of Mahamudra.*

A major difference between the traditional sutra and the Mahamudra approach is that the understanding of, for example,

emptiness in the Mahayana is achieved by studying and contemplating and debating a series of texts on the Prajnaparamita which were written in India by great scholars. The texts on Mahamudra, on the other hand, were often written by highly accomplished siddhas who would explain their realization of years and years of Mahamudra meditation in brief spiritual songs called dohas. These dohas, often only a few dozen lines long, are still sung by the lamas today. They often contain the most profound instructions in metaphors of great beauty derived from simple meditative experience.

This *Song of Lodro Thaye* is just such a *doha* and covers the entire path of Mahamudra in less than 300 lines of verse. This spiritual song was first translated into English in the *Rain of Wisdom*. However, the spiritual song is condensed in meaning so one needs someone accomplished in Mahamudra meditation to explain the meaning of this great work. Such a person is Thrangu Rinpoche who not only was asked to establish the curriculum of the Kagyu lineage after the Tibetans were forced into exile in 1959, but also taught the four major regents of the lineage including Jamgon Kongtrul's reincarnation.

This particular book came about when Thrangu Rinpoche was asked to give teachings on Mahamudra at Gampo Abbey in Nova Scotia. Gampo Abbey is one of a few Buddhist monasteries in North America and Thrangu Rinpoche is its abbot. In October of 1989 Thrangu Rinpoche gave this line-by-line commentary and it was first published in the *Profound Path of Peace*. Sarah Harding translated this teaching that Rinpoche gave and when it was decided to publish this book, she not only retranslated the original spiritual song based on the teaching given by Thrangu Rinpoche, but also went through the tapes of the teaching and retranslated and checked every word of the teaching.



Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye

The Song of Lodro Thaye

by JAMGON KONGTRUL THE GREAT

1. Vajradhara, the illustrious one,
2. Said to possess eight enlightened qualities
3. Appears to me, an ordinary person,
4. As a man called Padma, the protector, full of blessings.
5. I supplicate you: never for a moment leave
6. The eight-petaled lotus-dome of my heart.
7. Though I am not graced with simultaneous liberation and realization,
8. I am blessed with just recognizing my own true nature.
9. Obsession with the eight worldly concerns has decreased.
10. By mixing my mind with the guru's
11. I have seen clearly that famous "luminous dharmakaya."
12. Non-thought was found amidst discursive thought
13. Wisdom dawned within non-conceptualization.
14. Delighted to become a lineage heir of the Dakpo Buddhas,
15. I am moved to lift my voice in appreciation.
16. From the dakini's secret treasure in Uddiyana in the West,
17. The great siddha Tilo
18. Opened the treasure chest of the three gems.
19. At the monastery of Splendid Ravishing Flowers in the North
20. The learned great pandita Naropa
21. Engendered the sign of attainment of inseparable prana-mind.

22. *In the valley of herbs, Drowolung, in the South,*
23. *The translator, an emanation of Hevajra,*
24. *Established the wellspring of all siddhas.*
25. *In the Lachi snow mountains of the West*
26. *The excellent being, Laughing Vajra,*
27. *Attained the state of unity in one lifetime.*
28. *In the pure land of Dvagla Gampo in the East*
29. *The honorable doctor, the second Buddha,*
30. *Actualized the samadhi of the tenth bodhisattva level.*
31. *In the holy places of the body, speech, and mind centers,*
32. *The many siddhas of the four great and eight lesser lineages*
33. *Gained the essential power of Mahamudra*
34. *And couldn't help but reach Buddhahood.*
35. *Expert in the attracting power through bodhichitta,*
36. *They couldn't help but bring benefit to beings.*
37. *Having perfected the two accumulations, this profound attainment of wealth,*
38. *They could not help but experience enjoyment.*
39. *Developing the knowledge that "understanding one liberates all."*
40. *They couldn't help but fulfill their great prophecies.*
41. *Children of parents who have accumulated much wealth*
42. *Are naturally rich due to previous karma.*
43. *Offspring of the white lioness and of the great garuda*
44. *Are naturally fully developed with the power of their species.*
45. *The followers of the lineage of Kagyu siddhas*
46. *Meditate naturally from the strength of blessings.*
47. *Boastfully counting the years of practice,*
48. *Proud about dwelling in leisure,*
49. *Puffed up over the exertions of sitting,*
50. *Chauvinist in discriminating self above others,*
51. *Keeping track of one's ordinary discursive thoughts,*

52. *Counting them to be the actual realizations on the paths and stages:*
53. *Such are the distinctive characteristics of foolish meditators in this degenerate age.*
54. *No siddha can be named who would be free of them*
55. *But because of the fine oral instructions of the exemplary lineage*
56. *The primordial wisdom of ultimate Mahamudra is seen.*
57. *Foundation Mahamudra is understanding the nature, the view.*
58. *Path Mahamudra is experiencing it, the meditation.*
59. *Fruition Mahamudra is the realization of Buddhahood in one's mind.*
60. *I am unworthy, but my guru is excellent.*
61. *Even though born in the degenerate age, I have good fortune.*
62. *In spite of little perseverance, the instructions are profound.*
63. *What is foundation Mahamudra?*
64. *It exists in two ways: the natural state and the state of confusion.*
65. *It cannot be divided into samsara or nirvana,*
66. *And it is devoid of the extremes of adding on or taking away.*
67. *Not created by a cause, not altered by conditions,*
68. *Confusion does not make it worse.*
69. *Realization does not improve it.*
70. *Confusion is not experienced, nor is it liberation.*
71. *Since its essence cannot be established in any way,*
72. *Its expression is unimpeded and can appear in any way.*
73. *Encompassing all of samsara and nirvana, it is like space.*
74. *Confusion or liberation, it is the basis of all,*
75. *Self-illuminating, knowing, capable of manifestation.*
76. *With the foundation consciousness*
77. *Being neutral, it has a cognizing aspect.*
78. *Empty in essence, its nature is luminous.*
79. *[Emptiness and luminosity] are inseparable, the heart essence is awareness.*

80. Unidentifiable as anything, it [resembles] space.
81. It is immaculately clear, crystal jewel.
82. It is self-knowing, self-illuminating, like the brilliance of a butter lamp
83. Inexpressible, it is (like) the experience of a mute.
84. Unveiled, it is splendid transcendent wisdom.
85. Clear light, dharmakaya, sugatagarbha,
86. It is pure from the beginning and spontaneous.
87. Nobody can prove it by the use of examples,
88. No words can express it.
89. The dharmadhatu cannot be examined by logic.
90. This is laid down right at the beginning
91. One should dissipate all doubts.
92. Maintaining meditation sustained by the view
93. Is like a garuda soaring to the sky,
94. Devoid of any fear or doubt
95. Meditation without the view
96. Resembles a blind person entering a plain
97. There is no way to determine the correct path
98. If we have the view but cannot meditate
99. It is like a wealthy person consumed with avarice:
100. It does not yield results for himself and others
101. Practicing the union of both is the authentic view.
102. This neutral state has an ignorant aspect,
103. Which for five reasons, one does not recognize one's own face.
104. The ocean of co-emergent ignorance,
105. Is set in motion by waves of confused ego-clinging
106. Awareness becomes the "I" and its own luminosity becomes the objects.
107. The imprints of subject and object become solid.
108. So that karma is accumulated and brought to fruition

109. The water wheel of samsara turns continuously.
110. While [samsara] is turning, its essence remains immaculate.
111. At the very instance of appearing, it [appearances] is devoid of true reality.
112. Just appearance, they are the brilliance of the three kayas
113. The nature of their arising is unborn.
114. The unborn cannot be obstructed.
115. Between these two, there is no abiding.
116. From this mind itself, so hard to describe,
117. The various displays of samsara and nirvana arise.
118. Seeing them as self-liberating is the highest view.
119. If it is recognized, all is suchness.
120. If there is nothing to refute or establish, it is the innate state.
121. When conceptual mind is transcended, there is the ultimate.
122. Path Mahamudra refers to
123. The Mahamudra of mind itself and the Mahamudra of apparent existence.
124. Spontaneous mind is the dharmakaya.
125. Spontaneous appearances are the light of the dharmakaya.
126. When the blessings of the glorious lamas
127. And one's own karmic dispositions come together
128. One sees one's own face as if meeting an old acquaintance.
129. Endless explanation is useless,
130. The beginner needs a starting point.
131. Don't welcome or dwell on thoughts of past and future.
132. In each moment, there is the mind of nowness.
133. In the continual, innate state
134. There is not the slightest thing for mind to meditate on,
135. Or for getting lost for a moment in the confusion of wandering thought.

136. [For the mind to be] Without distraction, without meditation or fabrication is essential,
137. Fresh, relaxed and naturally clear.
138. In the space of the three doors of freedom,
139. Carefully establish mindfulness and awareness.
140. The balance of mind between tight and loose must always be kept.
141. Thus subtle, gross and strong thoughts will be pacified.
142. Remain in the state of natural, uncontrived mind.
143. Gradually, the four grades of experience will arise.
144. The sun of luminosity will continuously shine
145. And the root of Mahamudra meditation will have been planted.
146. If it is lacking, talk of higher realization
147. Resembles building a castle without a foundation.
148. Yet being too attached to it is an activity of mara.
149. Those who have studied little, but apply great effort
150. Are often seduced by seeming virtues,
151. Guiding themselves and others to the lower realms.
152. Bliss, clarity, and non-thought may be wonderful experiences,
153. But they are causes of samsara if one clings to them
154. Having hammered the nail of devotion into your heart
155. When rock hits bone in natural awareness
156. The ultimate lineage of blessing is transferred.
157. Not getting lost in the four types of deviations,
158. Not falling into the three errors,
159. Surpassing the four joys, free from the three conditions,
160. And connecting with the three ways of arising,
161. We won't be troubled by the mind of the three great ones.
162. The self-arisen nature is not changed by experiences.
163. It resembles the center of a cloudless sky.
164. Self-aware, self-illuminating, it can't be put in words.

165. It is primordial wisdom beyond analogy or concepts.
166. The nakedness of ordinary mind
167. Without anything to understand or to boast about,
168. Is clearly seen as the dharmakaya.
169. The six sense objects appear like the moon in water,
170. In the sphere of primordial wisdom.
171. Whatever arises is unfabricated, the innate state.
172. Whatever is perceived has the nature of Mahamudra.
173. The phenomenal world is the great bliss of the dharmakaya.
174. Meditation finding naturally its own place is Shamatha,
175. Seeing the unseeable nature is Vipashyana
176. In all phases of stillness, movement and awareness
177. These two are not separate, but coincide.
178. The confusion of discursive thought is not to be abandoned
179. The virtuous action of the antidotes cannot be achieved.
180. The time will come when you arrive naturally at this state.
181. When you are well established in this realization,
182. You'll never be outside of meditation
183. At the borderline between freedom and attainment
184. Even meditation itself has no existence.
185. But beginners, whose discursive mind has not subsided
186. Should highly cherish meditation.
187. By means of meditation, experiences come up.
188. Experiences arise as adornments of awareness.
189. If one wants to divide the path, there are four yogas:
190. Knowing mind's own face is "one-pointedness"
191. And has lesser, intermediate and greater stages.
192. Seeing bliss and luminosity in alternation,
193. Obtaining mastery over the concentration of meditative equipoise.
194. And uninterrupted experience of luminous appearances.

195. Realizing the rootlessness of mind is "no elaboration"
196. And has lesser, intermediate, and greater stages:
197. Realizing that arising, ceasing and abiding are empty,
198. Being free from the fundamental root of clinging to appearances or clinging to emptiness,
199. And cutting through all exaggerations caused by elaborating on phenomena.
200. Mixing appearances and mind is "one-taste"
201. And has lesser, intermediate, and greater stages:
202. Mixing the dharmas of the two kinds into one equal taste.
203. Appearances and mind become like water poured into water.
204. And many types of primordial wisdom arising from one taste.
205. The complete purification of rigid mind is "non-meditation"
206. And has lesser, intermediate and greater stages:
207. Being free from all ideas of meditation and meditator.
208. Gradually purifying the imprint of the veils of knowledge
209. And the mixing of the mother and child clear light.
210. The primordial wisdom of the dharmadhatu pervades space.
211. In short, as far as meditation is concerned:
212. If the mind can dwell according to our wishes, this is one-pointedness.
213. One then sees the face of ordinary mind.
214. Realizing that there is no foundation is "no elaboration."
215. Liberating all dualistic perception
216. In awareness is "one-taste."
217. Transcending all conventional terms of meditating or not meditating,
218. The imprints are ended. This is "non-meditation."
219. Those on the level of the great yogins,
220. Starting with Naropa and Maitripa,
221. Down to my venerable lama Pema Wangpo,

222. Those belonging to the golden garland of the Kagyu
223. Have gone to the dharmakaya kingdom of non-meditation,
224. They have purified the darkness of the two veils in the dhatu
225. Extended the great skill of the two kinds of knowledge
226. And opened the treasury that pervades space for the benefit of others.
227. They remain as a refuge beyond doubt.
228. The oral lineage has been passed from one to another
229. This means that it is not just words, but the meaning that counts.
230. Even though I am an undisciplined, vile ordinary person
231. As I am holding the sign of your noble lineage,
232. Please lead me quickly to the kingdom of non-meditation.
233. Kind ones, please completely purify my rigid mind in the dhatu.
234. Fruition Mahamudra is concerned with
235. The ground is introduced as one's own face, the innate three kayas;
236. The path consists in concentrating on the view and meditation;
237. And the fruition is the manifestation of the immaculate three kayas.
238. The dharmakaya is the basis, emptiness without any elaboration.
239. The sambhogakaya is its brilliance, the naturally luminous.
240. The nirmanakaya is the unceasing play of various manifestations
241. Encompassing all things,
242. The nature of Mahamudra is coincidence.
243. The realm of dharmas free from accepting or rejecting.
244. Possessing the beauty of unconditioned bliss,
245. It is the great and vast wealth of wisdom.
246. It is the natural form of kindness transcending thought.
247. Because of wisdom, one does not stay in samsara
248. Because of compassion, one does not stay in nirvana

249. Activities are spontaneously accomplished without effort.
250. The luminosities of ground and path, combine like mother and child.
251. Ground and fruition will be joined together
252. Buddhahood is found in one's own mind.
253. The treasure that fulfills all wishes is revealed
254. E ma! What a great wonder!
255. Regarding the view of Mahamudra
256. Analysis cannot define it.
257. Therefore, throw knowledge of mental constructions away!
258. Regarding the meditation of Mahamudra
259. Concentration on a thought cannot get through
260. Therefore abandon artificial resting in meditative equipoise.
261. Regarding the action of Mahamudra
262. Rules do not apply.
263. Therefore free yourself from notions of acting and not acting.
264. Regarding the fruition of Mahamudra
265. Nothing new can be attained.
266. Therefore cast away hoping, fearing, and desiring.
267. This is the profound intention of all Kagyupas.
268. It is the only path used by all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.
269. It is the method to turn away the confused circle of existence
270. It is dharma for obtaining Buddhahood in one lifetime,
271. The heart essence of the sutra and tantra teachings.
271. May I and all sentient beings reaching as far as space
272. Simultaneously attain realization and be liberated.
273. May we reach the supreme Mahamudra state.

The Song of Lodro Thaye

commentary by

KHABJE KHENCHEN THRANGU RINPOCHE

1
The Importance of the Lineage Lamas

In the words of the Buddha or the sutras and the practices of Mahamudra it is especially important to supplicate the root and lineage lamas. It was said that it is most important to supplicate one's own root or main lama so that one will receive the blessings. The most important method to receive blessing is through devotion (Tib. *mö gu*).

In the sutras of the Buddha, there were predictions stating that in later times when the dharma would degenerate, there would be ways to prevent the degeneration of the dharma and make it flourish. One prediction was that there would be a special individual named Lodro who would prevent or forestall this degeneration. It is said he would prevent the degeneration of the dharma "in five ways"[1] and make it flourish. This was foretold by the Buddha in the *King of Samadhi* sutra and elsewhere.

The glorious, holy guru Lodro Thaye, also called Karma Ngakwang Yonten Gyatso, after having accomplished the realization of Mahamudra composed this *spiritual song* (Skt. *doha*, Tib. *gyur*). It is entitled, *The Self-Arising Innate Song upon Acquiring a Mere Glimpse of Certainty in the View and Meditation of the Incomparable Dakpo Kagyu.* This spiritual song discusses the practice of Mahamudra meditation.

The most important aspect of this practice is the supplication of the root and lineage lamas. From the root guru one receives blessings. Most important in receiving blessings is to have devotion. Therefore the song begins by praising the lineage of these teachings.

1. Vajradhara, the illustrious one,
2. Said to possess eight enlightened qualities

At the very beginning of this spiritual song, it says that Vajradhara was exceptional because he is endowed with eight special qualities. Vajradhara is the dharmakaya and therefore has the eight qualities or aspects. On the ordinary level these are of the five elements of (1) earth, (2) water, (3) fire, (4) air or wind, and (5) space, to which are added (6) red and (7) white elements from the mother and father and (8) consciousness.[2] In the case of the dharmakaya Vajradhara, these are completely pure.

In general, our experience is that our body consists of the eight elements. To us they appear to provide our vitality and life-force. But these substances are really a cause of bewildered appearances and keep us limited, unable to develop. For instance, the earth element gives us strength, the power of our body. But it is not vast so there is a limit to our physical strength because the earth element has a limiting quality. However, when the earth element is pure at the level of dharmakaya Vajradhara, then the *siddhis* and enlightened activities are unimaginable. Similarly, the water element gives us illness and experiences of happiness and sadness and so on. When it is completely pure at the level of a Buddha, however, it is naturally free from illness, sadness, and pain. The fire element gives us the ability to have bodily warmth and vigor, but it is not unlimited either. If it is pure, the dharmakaya and the sambhogakaya have the ability to radiate light unimaginable and vast throughout all the Buddha realms

with no limit. The wind element gives us the ability to move and perform activities and actions. But again this is not unlimited activity. On the level of the dharmakaya this purified element has the ability of endless, unimaginable miraculous powers. The space element adds a quality of lightness to our being and we would just kind of implode if we didn't have the space element as part of us. But still it is a restriction. In the purified aspect of dharmakaya, it makes complete and total unobstructed manifestation of everything possible. In addition to these five main elements there is a *red element* and a *white element*. The red element allows us to have a body: it allows for the development and existence of a body. But it does not have the power to emanate bodies. With the purification of the red element endless emanations of the body are possible. The white element gives us a feeling of happiness or bliss. This bliss is a very limited kind of bliss and is not the limitless bliss that is experienced when the white element is completely purified. The eighth element is consciousness which allows us to understand, to see, to hear, smell, taste, and so on. But essentially it is ignorant knowing in a limited way, that consciousness cannot know fully. When the element of consciousness is purified and wisdom (Skt. *jnana*, Tib. *yeshe*) arises, one attains the state of understanding all phenomena or omniscience. When these eight qualities are completely pure, then the enlightened activities of the dharmakaya of a Buddha are endless and boundless.

3. Appears to me, an ordinary person,
4. As a man called Padma, the protector, full of blessings.

Although Vajradhara is widely known as the dharmakaya possessed with these eight qualities, to Jamgon Kongtrul he doesn't appear in this way, but in a human form, i.e., his guru. Jamgon Kongtrul received all of the instructions and all the blessings from

his root guru, the ninth Situ, Pema Nyingche Wangpo, and therefore he supplicates him as the lord named Padma who is endowed with the blessing. Jamgon Kongtrul had exceptional faith and devotion to his lama, Pema Nyingche Wangpo, and regarded him as actually being Vajradhara. Even though he had human form, Jamgon Kongtrul thought that he actually was Vajradhara with all the eight qualities and so the qualities of devotion arose in his stream of being. We as disciples should do likewise by having absolute faith in our root lama so much so that we regard him or her as Vajradhara. Whether our lama is exceptionally learned or has extraordinary qualities or not, we should still think he or she is definitely Vajradhara.

With sacred outlook or pure vision, Jamgon Kongtrul regarded his lama as Vajradhara even though he appeared to look like a human being. So Jamgon Kongtrul says, "To me he appears to be only a human, but in fact he is actually Vajradhara." In the same way, through our sacred outlook, we should regard our root lama without faults, and if there are no spiritual qualities, we should regard him or her as having spiritual qualities. With pure vision we should see the lama with faults as without faults, and the lama without good qualities as with good qualities.[3]

5. I supplicate you: never for a moment leave
6. The eight-petaled lotus-dome of my heart.

We should regard the lama as being Vajradhara with the eight qualities and also we should constantly keep in mind and pray one-pointedly and supplicate the lama. It says that in one's heart, visualized in a tent of an eight-petaled lotus, there dwells the lama and the lama is there constantly. So not even for a second are we separated from the lama and so we can continuously recall the root lama.

In the practice of Mahamudra devotion is crucial. It is said in the Kagyu lineage prayer (Tib. *Dorje Chang Thungma*) that "devotion is the head of meditation." If someone doesn't have a head, they can't eat food, can't listen to anything, and can't see anything, and so on. But if they have a head, then they can eat and talk and see and hear. Devotion is like this because with devotion one develops one's meditation and then is able to receive the blessings of the lama. The method of bringing about devotion is supplication. That is why in Mahamudra practices, we rely on *guru yoga* as the method to develop devotion. Jamgon Kongtrul shows that he has devotion in this way and that we should also supplicate the lama and arouse devotion. In the case of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, for instance, his guru yoga practice was a sadhana practice combining Karma Pakshi (the second Karmapa) and Dorje Trollo (the wrathful aspect of Guru Rinpoche) arising from his pure vision.

7. Though I am not graced with simultaneous liberation and realization,
8. I am blessed with just recognizing my own true nature.

What are the benefits of supplicating and meditating on the lamas and arousing devotion? It is possible to attain realization and liberation, instantaneously, such as happened with King Indrabhuti who received the Mahamudra teachings, attained realization, and instantly became liberated at the same time. Jamgon Kongtrul says that he's not as fortunate as King Indrabhuti who attained realization and was liberated instantly through his devotion. However, through his devotion and meditation on the lama, Jamgon Kongtrul received enough blessing to understand the essence of his mind.

9. Obsession with the eight worldly concerns has decreased.

What is the sign that Jamgon Kongtrul understood something of the nature of his mind through the power of his supplication and devotion? First, his attention to and attachment to the eight worldly concerns has diminished. The eight worldly concerns are phenomena which contradict dharma and keep one from dharma practice. They are (1) to be happy with pleasing things and (2) to be displeased with unpleasant phenomena; (3) to be happy with wealth and prosperity; and (4) to be displeased when not having it; (5) to be happy with praise and (6) to be displeased when one is not praised or slandered; and (7) to be happy when one has fame and (8) unhappy when one is not well known. Having excessive attachment to these can be an obstacle to the practice of dharma. But if one practices dharma well, one's attachments are diminished. So Jamgon Kongtrul is saying although he has a small understanding of his own nature, based on the lama's blessing his tendency for attachment to the eight worldly concerns is diminished.

10. By mixing my mind with the guru's
11. I have seen clearly that famous "luminous dharmakaya."

This describes the result of his supplication, devotion, and understanding of his mind. Similarly, the next line "That famous 'luminous dharmakaya'" is about the nature of clarity or luminosity (Tib. *salwa*) that everybody's heard so much about. Jamgon Kongtrul is saying, "I have seen it. I have realized it," through the kindness of his root lama, Pema Nyingche Wangpo. This was done in meditation by visualizing Pema Nyingche Wangpo on his head and receiving the four empowerments from him. In this visualization white, red, blue, and yellow light emanated from the four chakras (the forehead, the throat, the heart, and the navel) of his guru and entered into the four chakras of Jamgon Kongtrul. By meditating this way, he was

completely filled with light and received the four empowerments: the vase empowerment, the secret empowerment, wisdom empowerment, and the name empowerment. The blessings of body, speech, and mind entered. Then the entire being of Pema Nyingche Wangpo dissolved into light and melted into Jamgon Kongtrul making him and his guru inseparable. The mind of the guru and the mind of Jamgon Kongtrul completely mixed, which is called "mixing mind and mind." This practice is the combining of the lama's mind with one's own mind believing completely that one's mind is completely inseparable so that whatever qualities, realizations and experiences the lama's mind has are now one's own realization and experience. By just thinking and believing in this experience of the mixing of the minds, realization actually arises. Jamgon Kongtrul says, "Mind and mind mixing, I see it transparently." This means he saw the dharmakaya. Based on the teachings of mixing the lama's mind with one's own, he is saying that we also need to practice in this way.

12. Non-thought was found amidst discursive thought
13. Wisdom dawned within non-conceptualization.

At first we are completely involved by many discursive thoughts, then gradually the thoughts clear away and we attain a state of non-thought through this practice. Even though there are many thoughts, with practice we develop the beginning of non-thought and the result of that development of reduced thought is that pristine wisdom gradually dawns.

14. Delighted to become a lineage heir of the Dakpo Buddhas,
15. I am moved to lift my voice in appreciation.

Having first met and supplicated Pema Nyingche Wangpo, Jamgon Kongtrul was able to enter into the teachings of the Dakpo Kagyu and able to do these practices.[4] Through his devotion and supplication and receiving these blessings and receiving the indications of the blessings, Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche feels like a child of the lineage, a possessor, or almost successor, of this lineage, and realizing this he is extremely pleased and very happy and joyful.

So Jamgon Kongtrul made supplications to the lama, and based on the supplications he received blessing, then through the blessing realization dawned. After attaining realization he reflected on how realization had arisen due to faith and how one needs to mix one's mind with the lama's, and how if one doesn't, then experience and realization won't arise. It was not really enough for these experiences to have arisen in him alone, so he explains this to everybody so that they will receive the blessing of the lama and practice in this same way. Then the desire to compose this song arose in him.

16. From the dakini's secret treasure in Uddiyana in the West,
17. The great siddha Tilo
18. Opened the treasure chest of the three gems.

Up to this point Jamgon Kongtrul has been talking about his root lama and the benefits of the practice of the lama. After describing the great blessing of the root lama, he goes on to describe the lineage lamas who are the source of these powerful oral instructions and practices. "In Uddiyana in the West" is a poetic devise in which "West" means west to Bodhgaya in India. As described in the spiritual biography of Tilopa, he traveled miraculously to Uddiyana, the dakini's land and received three special or pith instructions from Uddiyana and these are the Three Gems (Tib. *norbu sum*) of Tilopa. The first special instruction of Tilopa was the "wish-fulfilling jewel

of lineage," the second "the wish-fulfilling jewel of maturation," and the third "the wish-fulfilling jewel of the path of liberation." The first jewel deals with the instructions, supplication, and devotion in the guru yoga practice. The second one explains the Six Yogas of Naropa, for developing the channels, winds, and energies[5] in order to attain liberation. The third path of liberation is Mahamudra practice which doesn't involve practice of the channels, winds, or energies, but involves meditating naturally in *samadhi,* and based on this meditation, realization arises.

So, the founder of the Kagyu lineage, Tilopa, brought from Uddiyana, from Chakrasamvara, and from Vajradhara these special instructions called the Three Gems.

Of the two approaches (the path of method and the path of liberation), the path of liberation is doing very hard meditation and the path of method is employing various means for developing the life-giving energy of the body or the prana. When one has some control over the prana by being able to restrict or bind it, the experience of heat arises. With the experience of heat, the experience of bliss arises. With the experience of bliss, one's realization and experience becomes clearer and clearer. When this clarity is attained through the path of method, eventually wisdom or prajna will dawn.

19. At the monastery of Splendid Ravishing Flowers in the North
20. The learned great pandita Naropa
21. Engendered the sign of attainment of inseparable prana-mind.

The second holder of the Kagyu lineage is Naropa. He is in the north in a place called "Illustrious, Seductive Flowers" which in Sanskrit is "Pupahari." The north here indicates the University of Nalanda, a very important and special place where the *Buddhadharma* flourished. Here Marpa first met Naropa and received many

teachings. There the learned one, the great pandita Naropa, displayed signs which indicated that he was a *siddha* whose prana and mind had become inseparable. This sign results from the exceptional practice of the Six Yogas of Naropa.[6]

Normally, "subtle wind" which is called *prana* in Sanskrit or *lung* in Tibetan is pretty much synonymous with breath. We think of prana as the inhalation and exhalation of breath, moving in and out with the body. This is our feeling or experience of prana. What we call "mind" is the movement of discursive thought that we perceive. There are two kinds of prana. On the grosser level it seems simply that prana is this feeling of the body inhaling and exhaling. But on a closer examination, prana is the moving of the mind which creates the feeling of prana. The mind and thoughts are connected with the prana because they are both moving. We believe inhalation is one thing and our thought process is another. But in fact they are inseparable. For instance, the feeling of *lung*, the feeling of wind being exhaled and inhaled, is actually just a perception of mind. If we try to locate exactly where this prana is by asking, "Is it in our body? Is it outside our body? and so on, we simply can't find it solidly existing like a typhoon. The exhalations and inhalations are mental phenomena.

The experience of the inseparability of prana and mind begins to happen with the practice of subtle heat (Tib. *tummo*) in which we are working on our breath, particularly holding the breath. When we hold the breath we start to notice that the mind also stays. Then the physical obscurations are cleared and bliss is generated. When this happens, there is more and more clarity and insight into the nature of mind. This engenders the realization of the inseparability of mind and prana. By changing the mind we can change the prana, by changing the prana we can change the mind. This is why there are so many meditations based on the breath; they show this inseparability

of mind and breath. In the beginning of tranquility (Skt. *Shamatha*) meditation we focus on our exhalation and inhalation. By calming the breath, we calm the mind and less thoughts arise. All the way up to the practice of subtle heat where we hold the breath and cultivate the prana, we meditate on breath. Even in the visualization practice of Vajrayogini, the vajra recitation of this practice is based on the breath.

22. In the valley of herbs, Drowolung, in the South,
23. The translator, an emanation of Hevajra,
24. Established the wellspring of all siddhas.

The next lineage holder is Marpa Lotsawa. The line, "In the valley of herbs, Drowolung, in the South" means that it is a very isolated area where many different plants and medicinal herbs grow which wouldn't grow in populated areas. So this really means in the wilderness. Marpa (who came from the Trowo valley in Tibet) was actually an emanation of Hevajra and being an emanation of Hevajra, his main activity was to translate books from the Indian languages into Tibetan. He is called a *lotsawa*, which means "a translator." He stayed in Trowolung which was an isolated place but the "wellspring of all siddhas" means that although it was isolated, many disciples came and because the special teachings were so profound, they attained siddhi. They in turn transmitted these teachings to others who also became siddhas. Therefore it is said that Marpa established the source of the river, which is a spring, from which many siddhas have arisen. The reason is that the special teachings were so profound.

25. In the Lachi snow mountains of the West
26. The excellent being, Laughing Vajra,
27. Attained the state of unity in one lifetime.

Then the lineage continues to Milarepa whose main abode was the snow mountain range of Lachi. The fact that a cold region was his main abode is an indication of his practice of subtle heat. He is called Shepa Dorje or "Laughing Vajra," because when Marpa bestowed the empowerment of Chakrasamvara on him, Chakrasamvara was seen actually appearing and giving the name "Laughing Vajra" to Milarepa. Because he had these exceptional teachings and put them into practice, Milarepa attained the ability to reach the state of union (enlightenment) in a single lifetime.

28. In the pure land of Dhaklha Gampo in the East
29. The honorable doctor, the second Buddha,
30. Actualized the samadhi of the tenth bodhisattva level.

Milarepa passed on these special and exceptional teachings to Gampopa who was like a second Buddha. By putting these exceptional teachings from Milarepa into practice, Gampopa was able to actualize the samadhi of the tenth *bodhisattva level* (Skt. *bhumi*). In the East in the pure land called Dhaklha Gampo, Gampopa established Dhaklha Gampo Monastery as his main seat and continued the lineage. So there were these first lineage holders: Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, Milarepa, and Gampopa.

31. In the holy places of the body, speech, and mind centers,
32. The many siddhas of the four great and eight lesser lineages
33. Gained the essential power of Mahamudra
34. And couldn't help but reach Buddhahood.

The line "in the holy places of body, speech, and mind centers" refers to the three main seats begun by Dusum Khyenpa (the first Karmapa) where the Karma Kagyu teachings flourished. The

monasteries referred to are Gampo (body), Karma Gön (speech), and Tsurphu (mind) monasteries. These are the three sources or three original seats of the Karma Kagyu teachings which Jamgon Kongtrul says are like the purified aspects of the chakras of body, speech, and mind, and that many siddhas arose from these centers.

Gampopa had many disciples and in these places of body, speech, and mind arose the four greater and eight lesser lineages of the Kagyu tradition. He gave some teachings to some disciples and other teachings to other disciples. He had twelve main disciples each of whom in turn completely passed on the special instructions they had received. In this way, they developed an unbroken lineage of the four greater and the eight lesser Kagyu schools.[7]

So in this way all the way down to one's root lama there have been unimaginable siddhas. All these various lamas of the Kagyu lineage are like siddhas or Buddhas because they practiced and mastered the Mahamudra. There was no way for them not to attain Buddhahood.

35. Expert in the attracting power through bodhichitta,
36. They couldn't help but bring benefit to beings.

These lineage lamas were able to benefit an unimaginable number of beings. Each one had many, many disciples who were very special individuals who were naturally drawn to them. The reason that they had these many disciples and were able to spread their teachings so widely was that they had *bodhichitta.* They had the aspiration to attain enlightenment which came from their desire to benefit beings. If one has bodhichitta, then automatically beings are drawn to one because of the bodhichitta. However, it will be very noticeable if someone with the desire to be surrounded by an entourage tries to promote him or herself. People can usually tell if something is not

very straightforward or honest and nobody comes. But if one has a sincere wish to help beings, then just from the power of the bodhichitta, beings gather around and there is an automatic ability to help many beings. The text says that because the lineage lamas are skilled in bodhichitta, there is no way beings will not be spontaneously or automatically helped through this bodhichitta, and there is no way not to help beings.

37. Having perfected the two accumulations, this profound attainment of wealth,
38. They could not help but experience enjoyment.

These lineage lamas also naturally acquired a great deal of wealth and necessities. If one thinks that there is something wrong with dharma practitioners acquiring wealth, then this is not quite a correct view. These genuine beings have no choice. These things are simply accumulated because they had completely accomplished the two accumulations of merit and wisdom. Having completed their accumulation of merit and wisdom, wealth and possessions automatically followed.

39. Developing the knowledge that "understanding one liberates all."
40. They couldn't help but fulfill their great prophecies.

Because these lamas all had great transcendent wisdom or prajna, all had received prophecies by the Buddha. For instance, the appearance of Gampopa and Jamgon Kongtrul were predicted in the sutras. They had prophecies due to their great insight and wisdom. This did not come about through many studies and working really hard but by developing the knowledge that "understanding one liberates all." If one really knows the meaning of *dharmata*, the nature

of true being, then one knows everything, so for this reason they had transcendental wisdom (Tib. *yeshe*).

So up to this point this spiritual song has reviewed the necessity of faith and devotion in the root and lineage lamas.

Questions

Question: What is unobstructed mind?
Rinpoche: Unobstructed means first of all unborn. If something is not born, there is no ceasing. then when you see that it is empty of essence, then there is no obstruction. If something were solid and corporeal it would be an obstruction. If at first there is emptiness, then there can be no thing to obstruct.

Mind's very nature is empty, therefore, the appearances that arrive from within that emptiness are also by nature empty, they basically have no intrinsic reality.

Question: What is mind? Is it opposed to objects?
Rinpoche: To our perception it seems that mind arises based on objects. But really, objects arise based on mind. Without investigating it, mind seems to arise in response to objects. But if you really examine mind when it seems to arise, you see it is empty of essence. Therefore, it is called unborn and unceasing. Sometimes the terms "unobstructed," "unmoving," "primordially permanent" and "undemonstratable" and so forth are used. The reason is that its essential nature is non-existent. There is no way to say, "here it is," or "it is like this."

Question: If mind is unobstructed, how does karma fit in?
Rinpoche: As we discussed previously, there is the way it is and the way it is confused (or appears). Mind being permanent, unchanging,

etc. These are statements in relation to the way it is. Karmic cause and effect are used in terms of the confusion. From the perspective of confusion, anything can arise. When anything arises, karma takes place. As is said, "awareness is the self and intrinsic radiance is the effect." There is the perception of the existence of self and outer objects, and based on that actions are accumulated, and based on that their results occur, then the essential nature is completely lost. The root of all that, however, is the mind and in it there is not even a bit of existence. This is the whole point of meditating on the nature of mind—it is the root of the whole thing.

For example, on television we can watch the news from India or Russia or anything. But when we turn off the television it is basically dumb and speechless and can't show anything at all. Like this, anything that arises does so in basic bewilderment, but if you really look at the root or source, if you meditate on the mind, you see it is empty of anything. If you just look at the turned off television nothing is there.

2
The View in Mahamudra

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER THE necessity of the exalted root and lineage lamas, and the manner of showing faith and devotion for receiving the blessings was discussed. We will now discuss mainly the importance of enthusiastic effort, mindfulness, and awareness. Generally, the way to cultivate these is explained in the *Song of Lodro Thaye* as being dependent on the special qualities that have arisen due to the connection with the exceptional root and lineage lamas. So a special meditation arose in the stream of being of Jamgon Kongtrul, but it wasn't due to his own powers but to the blessings of the root and lineage lamas. It is explained by way of two examples.

Diligence, awareness, and mindfulness are very important for attaining experience quickly. But if we don't have them, everything is not just a waste of time. For instance, if a person in Halifax wants to go to Gampo Abbey, but doesn't have much mindfulness or diligence, he or she may take one step, and that is all. That person won't arrive at Gampo Abbey. In contrast, if one has thought, "I want to meditate," eventually this thought will have a great effect. So even just visualizing the lama one time above one's head or doing one mantra will later have a very great result and is certainly not a waste of time. But if we want to attain Buddhahood right now, then we really need diligence, mindfulness and awareness. So the

Buddha said when one takes one step with the motivation to attain enlightenment, it is very beneficial. But in the end it is not enough.

41. Children of parents who have accumulated much wealth
42. Are naturally rich due to previous karma.
43. Offspring of the white lioness and of the great garuda
44. Are naturally fully developed with the power of their species.

There are two examples given here. A child of a wealthy person is born with all the pleasures to enjoy him or herself. The child has not accumulated this through his own efforts but through the efforts of his father and forbearers. He or she has wealth to use and yet it wasn't through his or her own efforts but through positive karma accumulated in previous lives. The second example is of lion cubs and the garuda babies who are both very powerful animals. They are powerful from the time they are born,[8] not because they have developed the strength but they inherited their strength as part of their species.

45. The followers of the lineage of Kagyu siddhas
46. Meditate naturally from the strength of blessings.

In the same way, meditation naturally arose in the stream of being of Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche and the other lineage lamas regardless of whether they were diligent or not. This natural arising came through the power of blessings. The blessings were unbroken and pure starting from Tilopa right down to Jamgon Kongtrul's own lama Pema Nyingche Wangpo. It wasn't as if the lineage was good for a while and then broken later on. It was unsurpassed all the way through, not only in words and scholarship, but also in actual practice experience. Therefore, there was the power of blessings. Meditation

arose from the blessing of the lineage because each and every one of the holders of the lineage starting with Tilopa obtained complete mastery and was a siddha. He then passed these same instructions on to Naropa, who not only obtained the words but went on to obtain complete mastery of the meditation ability. He then passed them on to Marpa who also became a siddha. The lineage continued to Milarepa and so on to Pema Nyingche Wangpo.

47. Boastfully counting the years of practice,
48. Proud about dwelling in leisure,
49. Puffed up over the exertions of sitting,
50. Chauvinist in discriminating self above others,

The process of passing on the lineage is different from what ordinary people do. Ordinary individuals might meditate diligently for many years and announce, "I meditated for nine years" or "I have been meditating for fifteen years and it looks like I must have experience and realization because I have been meditating for all these years." But Jamgon Kongtrul did not say this because no matter how many years one meditates, if the three aspects of effort, mindfulness, and awareness are not present, it does not do any good.

Some people might develop pride about staying in retreat or alone in isolation, which should lead to great results in practice. But this pride is empty. If pride develops simply because of having stayed in retreat, no matter how long one meditates, if there is not mindfulness, awareness, or enthusiasm, there won't be any results. In fact, just being all alone with nothing to do and with nobody around is completely meaningless and nothing to be proud about.

Arrogance and haughtiness can develop when enduring an ascetic existence saying, "I have endured so many hardships. I have persisted through many difficulties in meditation. Because I have

gone through these many hardships and deprivations, this is practice." However, if one misses the point of the practice, there is nothing to be arrogant about.

A feeling of superiority can develop when one distinguishes oneself from others and regards others with disdain, thinking, "I am so much better than these people. I have such and such qualities that I developed over these long years, so I am actually much better than everybody else." Once again, if diligence, mindfulness, and awareness are not applied, one has missed the whole point of meditation and this feeling of superiority is absolutely useless.

51. Keeping track of one's ordinary discursive thoughts,
52. Counting them to be the actual realizations on the paths and stages:

One might believe one's ordinary thoughts are special thinking, "I have developed this spiritual quality" and being very hopeful about it. But again, without effort, mindfulness, and awareness this is useless. So the problem is thinking that, "Oh, I've been meditating, this must be a sign of good meditation." Then one keeps score: "There's an experience, this must be a sign of attaining the first bodhisattva level or sign of actual realization on the path."

To summarize, these five aspects of thinking of how long one has meditated, how much one has been in retreat, how much difficulty one has gone through, how much better one is than everyone else, and then keeping track of one's qualifications, are not beneficial at all.

53. Such are the distinctive characteristics of foolish
meditators in this degenerate age.
54. No siddha can be named who would be free of them
55. But because of the fine oral instructions of the exemplary lineage
56. The primordial wisdom of ultimate Mahamudra is seen.

These are degenerate times where faith and devotion don't come easily, and there are many mistaken kinds of meditation. These are the distinguishing characteristics of this age. We do not hear of mahasiddhas who are free of these characteristics. These kind of calculating thoughts of beings to be spiritually realized have nothing to do with true mastery or siddhi. It is no indication of spiritual qualities at all. Even though he lived in a degenerate age, Jamgon Kongtrul through the lineage received the true, profound instructions and practiced according to these instructions. Based on these special instructions of the lineage, the meaning, the result, the fruition of these instructions was seeing the transcendent wisdom of Mahamudra. Through the arising of this wisdom, the ground, path, and fruition Mahamudra is understood.

57. Foundation Mahamudra is understanding the nature, the view.
58. Path Mahamudra is experiencing it, the meditation.
59. Fruition Mahamudra is the realization of Buddhahood in one's mind.

In this text Mahamudra is divided into three parts: ground or foundation Mahamudra, path Mahamudra, and fruition Mahamudra. These three parts basically constitute the rest of the text. Of these three, the foundation has to do with the nature of things as they are, the nature of truth. Jamgon Kongtrul intellectually understood the nature of the view of Mahamudra, ground Mahamudra. The path of Mahamudra is meditation and what arises in meditation, that is, experience. Finally, the fruition of that experience arising in one's being is ultimately realizing that the Buddha is not outside of oneself, but within one. One's mind is the state of Buddha. These three aspects of ground, path, and fruition were fully understood by Jamgon Kongtrul.

60. I am unworthy, but my guru is excellent.
61. Even though born in the degenerate age, I have good fortune.
62. In spite of little perseverance, the instructions are profound.

How is it that Jamgon Kongtrul has understood the foundation Mahamudra, experienced the path, and realized the fruition Mahamudra? It is not just from himself for he says he has no power to engender these kinds of qualities or great wisdom and diligence. However, he did have the advantage that his lama was good. Also, even though he lived in a degenerate age where he could not even meet the Buddha or bodhisattvas, Jamgon Kongtrul was personally very fortunate, which was the second advantage that he had. Finally, he says that he had very little perseverance but he was fortunate in having received the profound teachings. Through these advantages: having a great lama, having great fortune, and having the profound teachings, he was able to realize the Mahamudra.

For these reasons Jamgon Kongtrul could compose this song, and his understanding and experience of Mahamudra make it worthwhile to study and practice. Next, the three aspects of ground, path, and fruition will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

3

Ground Mahamudra

I. Ground Mahamudra

63. What is foundation Mahamudra?

Mahamudra (Tib. *chakgya chenpo*) is Sanskrit, the word *maha* corresponding in Tibetan to *chenpo* which means "great." *Mudra* actually is the word *gya* in Tibetan, more commonly called *tise*, which means "seal" as in the seals a king stamps on his edicts. The Tibetan translators then added the word *chak* which is the honorific form for "hand," and is not actually in the Sanskrit word. *Gya* indicates the all-pervasive quality of Mahamudra. For instance, a king creates laws and edicts and may issue an edict with many minor points on it. He doesn't have to put his seal on every single point, but can just apply it once to indicate that all of these laws came from him. In the same way, when we meditate and recognize the true nature of mind, which is Mahamudra, it pervades all aspects of experience. Everything is possible, everything has this seal on it. So we don't have to meditate to clear away all our desire, then start again to eliminate aggression, then start again to remove ignorance, and so on. One realization, that of Mahamudra, removes all these different obscurations and develops all the good qualities.

So *gya* with this meaning of pervasiveness should be understood as intrinsic awareness (Skt. *jnana* Tib. *yeshe*). A *tise* is used mainly by a king on his edicts, and awareness is "stamped" on the general essence as well as the manifestations of all phenomena. *Chak* was needed because the natural essence of intrinsic awareness is emptiness. The luminosity and emptiness of phenomena are inseparable. Awareness and space (Tib. *ying*) are united. So the *chak* (hand), represents emptiness, because a hand with nothing in it, by itself, is also empty. The emptiness or space is *chak* and the clarity or pervasive awareness is *gya*. Awareness realizes emptiness, emptiness is the essence of awareness; and the two are inseparable.

In brief, how we are to understand *chak gya chen po* is that our mind stream or nature has awakened awareness (Skt. *buddhajnana*, Tib. *sang gye yeshe*). This awakened awareness is not like the "self" posited by other religious traditions, but its essential true nature is empty. This awareness, inseparable from dharmakaya, is present in all beings with sentience, and becomes manifest at the time of attaining the state of a Buddha.

In the Buddhist tradition, the goal of practice is to attain the state of a Buddha. But this state is not newly attained, but one that is manifested or realized. The Shakyamuni Buddha demonstrated that we already have this quality. Therefore, in Mahamudra this is called the ground or foundation Mahamudra, meaning we have it already. But because we do not experience it that way, then we need the path Mahamudra. Based on the path, what one already possesses can be actualized, and that's called fruition Mahamudra. So these are the ground, path, and fruition of Mahamudra.

The view is like this. Generally our whole experience consists of two kinds of grasping. All appearance occurs to us because of the objective grasping to object and subjective grasping of mind. Even though this is our experience, it is not actually the real state of

phenomena, but an illusion or bewilderment. Mahamudra is the realization of the true nature without bewilderment. From the point of view of Madhyamaka the true state of phenomena is emptiness. But everything is not just empty because there is also a clear or luminous aspect to it which we call awareness or jnana. That is why we talk about indivisibility or the union of space and awareness. This union of space and awareness is the view of ground Mahamudra. We need to intellectually understand this fact and then the actual experience of it is path Mahamudra. When this understanding and experience is complete, then one has achieved fruition Mahamudra.

There is an example in the *Uttaratantra* illustrating the relationship of ground, path, and fruition Mahamudra. It is as if a person lost a large bag of gold by throwing it out with the garbage and this gold became buried under the refuse. Eventually it became completely covered with dirt and sand and may have become tarnished. But the gold never lost any of its value because its qualities are inherent within the gold. Many thousands of years pass but the gold still keeps all of its value. Then a very poor man comes along and builds a shack on this spot not knowing that there is gold under it. He is very poor, not having clothes or food and all the time he is sitting on top of this incredibly valuable treasure. But the treasure does him no good because he does not know about it. Then a person with clairvoyance comes along and sees this person who is starving right on top of a huge treasure of gold. All he would need to do is say, you don't need to be so poor, just dig a few feet under the ground and you will have all this gold. So the poor man digs down a little bit and there is all this gold. Similarly, we say we have the nature of Mahamudra, but we don't know it. The Buddha comes along and says that we are Mahamudra and all you have to do is find it. The ground Mahamudra is the gold right underneath our feet. The poor man's effort to scrape away a little dirt to get at it is like the path

Mahamudra. If we don't make some effort, then we can't get the gold. Fruition Mahamudra is like when the poor man finds the gold and completely casts away his poverty.

64. It exists in two ways: the natural state and the state of confusion.

Ground Mahamudra exists in two ways: "the natural state and the state of confusion." That is, the natural way we are and the confusion that occurs from not having recognized that. In this example, the way it is (the nature) is that this poor man is sitting right on top of a lot of gold. We have Mahamudra; we have Buddha-nature (Skt. *tathagatagarbha*). However, the poor man is dwelling in poverty because he has no idea what he is sitting on. That is the confusion. Nevertheless in both cases the gold is there.

Within Mahamudra we possess Buddha-nature, we are Mahamudra, which is the true nature of things or the way they are (Tib. *ne lug*). We are confused because we simply don't recognize our true nature. That is the confused aspect (Tib. *trul lug).* We need to know why we are confused and where the confusion comes from. So in ground Mahamudra we need to deal with our nature (*ne lug)* and the way we are confused (*trul lug).*

65. It cannot be divided into samsara or nirvana,
66. And it is devoid of the extremes of adding on or taking away.

The next verses explain Mahamudra first as the nature of the way it is. First of all, Mahamudra does not fall into the category of being samsara or nirvana, of being good or bad. Samsara is without substantial reality to begin with, so nirvana or passing beyond suffering is also not something separate from that. Samsara and nirvana are not separate substantial things.

Furthermore, Mahamudra is completely without any elaboration or exaggeration, nor is it anything to be subtracted from or denigrated. You can't add qualities saying Mahamudra has such and such qualities. You also can't say Mahamudra has no qualities or characteristics and thus diminish it. All kinds of elaboration or embellishment, all kind of projections or conceptualization about Mahamudra are not possible. It is essentially free from all extremes of existence, nonexistence and so forth.

67. Not created by a cause, not altered by conditions,
68. Confusion does not make it worse.
69. Realization does not improve it.

Mahamudra also did not originate as a new phenomena and it did not result from any cause and it is not changed by any external conditions. Mahamudra has existed from the beginning of time and is present in all beings. The essence of Mahamudra never changes. It is unborn and unchangeable and immutable. In the example of the treasure, when the gold is in the ground, its essence is completely unchanged. The fact that it is covered with rubbish doesn't make it any worse or any better, because in essence it is gold. When the poor man digs it up, shines it up, and cleans away the dirt, the essence is still the same. It is not changed by the conditions of anyone doing anything with it. In this way, Mahamudra in the state of bewilderment of samsara is not any worse or any different from Mahamudra when it is recognized through the yogi's meditation, it also is not any better because it is unchanging.

In the Buddhist tradition the teachings of the Buddha are divided into the sutras and tantras. In the sutra tradition, in the philosophy called Middle-way, there are two ways of thinking about emptiness which are called the Rangtong or "Self-emptiness" school and the

Shentong or the "Other-emptiness" school. The Middle-way Rangtong school emphasizes the concept of dharmadhatu. The principal nature of Mahamudra is emptiness, and this is called dharmadhatu or the realm of reality. The Middle-way Shentong school, on the other hand, focuses on the aspect of awareness (Skt. *jnana)* and emphasizes the concept of *tathagatagarbha* or literally, "the essence of the tathagatas" (Buddhas), often called Buddha-nature or Buddha essence. In meaning however, these two concepts are essentially the same. In the tantras, based on actual meditation practice there is the emphasis on introduction or transmission which reveals the essence or nature of the mind, which we call Mahamudra. This mind's essence is basically the same as the Middle-way concepts of the sutra tradition. That is why Rangjung Dorje said that "Middle-way" and "Mahamudra," and "Dzogchen" all apply to the same thing.

70. Confusion is not experienced, nor is it liberation.
71. Since its essence cannot be established in any way,
72. Its expression is unimpeded and can appear in any way.

In Mahamudra, essentially there is no experience of bewilderment or confusion or liberation. Just as the gold underneath the earth has the same essence whether covered by earth or not, whether taken out or cleaned, it still retains the same essence, meaning it is the same material. This essence, furthermore, has no substantial reality. Since in essence it is identical with dharmadhatu, it's essentially, by nature, empty.

Although the essence of Mahamudra is non-existent, at the same time, its manifestation is completely unobstructed. For instance, we can say our mind is empty because when we look for it, it is nowhere to be found. However, when we don't look, it manifests as anything. It is completely unobstructed in its nature. In the same way,

Mahamudra does not actually exist as an object, it is dharmadhatu, but from the luminosity aspect it is unobstructed and can manifest in any way whatsoever. It can manifest as awareness (Tib. *yeshe*) on the level of Buddha or manifest as consciousness (Tib. *namshe*) on the level of ordinary beings.[9] It arises unimpeded as all positive or negative manifestations.

73. Encompassing all of samsara and nirvana, it is like space.

Mahamudra pervades everywhere, samsara as well as nirvana. When wandering in samsara, it is completely there in essence. Similarly, when going beyond suffering to a state of nirvana, it also is completely pervasive like the sky. Just as the sky is everywhere we go, so Mahamudra is completely all-pervasive.

74. Confusion or liberation, it is the basis of all,
75. Self-illuminating, knowing, capable of manifestation.

Ground or foundation Mahamudra is divided into two parts: the way things are and the way things are confused. The way things are concerns the essential quality of emptiness, the nature of luminosity (Tib. *salwa*) and the unimaginable qualities of awakening and how these qualities manifest. Now we will discuss the methods for realization of this true nature.

Mahamudra is also the foundation of everything, the foundation of all confusion and bewilderment, as well as the foundation of liberation. Mahamudra is the foundation of confusion in samsara because in samsara one's confusion is taking place in the space of Mahamudra. Similarly, one's liberation in nirvana is taking place in the space of Mahamudra. So Mahamudra is the ground of everything. Since it is the ground, apprehension of its own clarity can occur.

Due to Mahamudra having clarity (or luminosity), it is also possible for mind to arise in that space.

One could meditate directly on Mahamudra right from the beginning with diligence and attain Buddhahood. But it has been discovered that most of us need a tremendous amount of effort to do that and lose enthusiasm just doing the same thing all the time. Therefore, various skillful methods were devised to help us along in our Mahamudra practice. It is like having a big meal of plain rice with nothing on it. We can eat it once, but we can't keep eating it. We need to put a little salt and some soy sauce; then we are able to eat more and keep on eating rice. If we eat just plain rice, we lose our appetite when faced with a huge bowl of rice. So the *yidam* practices were developed as a skillful means to develop the mental faculties to focus the mind, to clarify the mind and to develop the sharpness of mind. These methods help us maintain our diligence in the practice of Mahamudra. These yidam practices are divided into the creation stage (Skt. *uppatti-krama*) and the completion stage (Skt. *sampanna-krama*). In the creation stage, the mind becomes very clear, very focused and free from distraction. The completion stage of yidam practice is no different from Mahamudra.

From the point of view of philosophy, there are two major schools of thought concerned here: the Mind-only (Skt. *Chittamatra*) school and the Middle-way (Skt. *Madhyamaka*) school. The Mind-only view is that all external appearances have no real existence but are just mind. The Middle-way school holds that the mind also has no real existence and is essentially empty. For those of us who do Mahamudra practice we must first understand that all external appearances or phenomena are actually mind and then realize the mind is empty to be able to establish the true view of Mahamudra.

How is it that all appearances are mind? First of all, through examination of solid external appearances we find that they do not

really exist. We simply use labels for external appearances that are made by the mind. For instance, we have the word "hand" which we apply to a hand. But if we examine this hand closely we find that the "hand" is actually made up of four fingers and the thumb and various joints and skin and so on. The thing we call a "hand" is actually made up of other parts and there isn't a single thing we can say is a hand. It is just a label for this collection of things that appear together. Even examining further, a thumb has joints and a knuckle and a fingernail and these different parts are conveniently labeled a "thumb," even though a thumb is not a single thing by itself.

So in this way we see that actual external objects have no real intrinsic existence. But how is this possible? In essence they do not exist, but they appear to the mind. What is the reasoning here? In the language of the dharma, we say, "being clarity, it is awareness." For example, I can say this table exists because it appears clearly in my mind. Other than that, I can give no other reason. Because I can see it with "my" eyes, I can understand it with "my" mind and I can touch it with "my" hand, therefore there seems to be a table there. If I ask someone else if it exists, they will say it does and when I ask why they will say, "I see it with 'my' eyes and I can touch it with 'my hand.'" So the existence of an object depends only on the relationship to our perception and there is no other reason to say it exists. Using careful reasoning we can come to the conclusion that all phenomena appear to our mind and exist relative to our mind and this is a sign that appearance *is* mind.

This is why we can say all appearances are mind. In general, there are two kinds of phenomena: external appearances and internal mental events. We have seen how external phenomena are mind. Subjectively, the mental experiences such as desire, confusion, hatred, compassion, love, happiness, and sadness are also obviously mind. So both external appearances and internal experiences are mind.

So by examination we first gain the understanding that all appearances are mind. Knowing this we sit down and practice meditation and from this meditation we gain a conviction that this is so, and we can meditate with this direct feeling that all phenomena are mind. The first stage is the "introduction" of all appearance as mind and the second is the causal experience in meditation.

What is the root of saying, "All phenomena are mind?" The text says, "with the foundation consciousness." In more detail, in the Mind-only Buddhist school the mind has eight aggregates of consciousness. This contrasts with non-Buddhist Indian philosophies where it is believed that these consciousnesses are a single consciousness called the "self" or *atman*. This non-Buddhist theory says that it seems mind has more than one consciousness but this can be explained by the example of a house with six windows and a single monkey inside; the monkey races around sometimes looking out the north window and sometimes looking out the south window and so forth. From the outside of the house it looks like there are many monkeys (consciousnesses) because one always sees a monkey's face in the six windows. But really, this is just one monkey. The non-Buddhist philosophies therefore conclude there is just one "self" which sometimes is perceived through the eyes, sometimes through the ears, sometimes the tongue and so on like the monkey running around.

From the Buddhist point of view, however, there are actually many consciousnesses. These are usually called the set of six or eight consciousnesses[10] which are called aggregates because there are many consciousnesses within each of these. Each consciousness has its own function; for example, the eye consciousness perceives visual form, and it doesn't hear sounds or smell smells and so on. The ear consciousness hears sounds but doesn't perceive visual forms, and so forth. Each of the six consciousnesses has a particular function and a

particular organ it is associated with. Thus the six groups of consciousnesses that perceive externally are associated separately with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

In addition to the six consciousnesses there is also the seventh consciousness called the afflictive or klesha consciousness. This seventh consciousness is extremely subtle. It maintains the sense of "I" or the obscured notion of self. It does not have much clarity. We can have an occasional strong clinging to the idea of self such as when we have accomplished something great or have done something terrible, this strong feeling of "I" is the result of the sixth mental consciousness, not the subtle continuous feeling of "I exist." The ever-present, underlying subtle sense of self or ego is the afflictive or seventh consciousness. The ground upon which these consciousnesses arise, the continuity of our mind which is present whether or not other consciousnesses are functioning is the eighth consciousness called the "alaya consciousness," or "all-ground consciousness." It is that bare continuum of clarity that is never interrupted and is the "foundation of all consciousnesses" mentioned in the root verse.[11]

How do these eight consciousnesses come about? Previously, we described two aspects of mind as being empty and being luminous clarity. When the emptiness aspect is strong the alaya consciousness is just empty. When the luminosity aspect becomes stronger, appearances arise in it. Yet if one doesn't examine the nature of that luminosity of the foundation consciousness, then without awareness of the essential emptiness of this consciousness, one errs on the side of luminosity by becoming attached to all the appearances, then the eighth consciousness becomes the "foundation of all confusion."[12]

76. With the foundation consciousness
77. Being neutral, it has a cognizing aspect.

Next is says that the eighth foundation consciousness is neutral, but has a "cognizing" or luminous clarity.[13] Although the nature of this foundation consciousness gives rise to ignorance, it is neither virtuous nor non-virtuous and is therefore called a neutral state. Virtuous or non-virtuous thoughts may arise to it, but the eighth consciousness itself is neutral. Although the eighth consciousness can give rise to ignorance, the essence of that ignorance is awareness due to its cognizing aspect or its luminosity, in the sense that anything can arise in the eighth consciousness. Since anything can arise in it, the cognizing aspect is also the cause of the ignorance or confusion.[14] For instance, if we have a television that produces pictures which are so vivid and so clear, we begin to think the things we see on it are really there. A person really appears to be there because it is so clear and perfect and this cognizing aspect itself lends itself to confusion.

78. Empty in essence, its nature is luminous.
79. [Emptiness and luminosity] are inseparable, the heart essence is awareness.
80. Unidentifiable as anything, it [resembles] space.

Although there is this aspect of ignorance, the foundation consciousness is "empty in essence" and "its nature is luminous."[15] In fact the emptiness and clarity are inseparable, but because of the power of the clarity aspect, the emptiness aspect of phenomena is not recognized. So the heart essence of awareness is somewhat confused. Although there is this confusion, essentially the foundation consciousness is not some physical, solid thing, but rather "it resembles space." The statement "the heart essence is awareness" means that the strong aspect of luminosity has the potential of awareness. There is both emptiness and luminosity, but the luminosity is more manifest and this is the heart essence of awareness (Tib. *rig pai snying*

po can). This is what is meant by "appearance is mind." Much arises in the foundation consciousness. When the appearances arise there, it is like our dreams. When we sleep, we can dream of mountains, oceans, horses, and elephants. Actually, they don't really appear, but the thought arises. When thoughts become more and more clear, they appear as things. In that way appearances arise in the mind. So we need to know that appearances are mind's own appearances.

First we must understand that all appearances are mind by simply contemplating it. Then we must experience directly that appearances are mind through meditation by turning inward. Most people never think of looking inward because their whole mind and consciousness is directed towards outward phenomena. Then through the lama's instructions we learn to look inward and to investigate awareness and consciousness. On top of that we need to know that mind is empty through recognizing its nature.

81. It is immaculately clear, crystal jewel.

So first we must understand that appearances are mind. Then we must realize that mind is empty. If one looks at the essence of mind, we examine or look at the foundation consciousness, the mental consciousness, and the sensory consciousnesses. Wherever we look, we find that mind has no flaws or stains. It's like the clarity of an immaculate jewel or a crystal. If we look into a crystal we think we see something in it, but really there is nothing there, just clarity, just a perfect clear crystal. In this way when we look at the mind there is nothing to see, just sheer clarity. This is what is meant by "empty" or "empty in essence."

82. It is self-knowing, self-illuminating, like the brilliance of a butter lamp

Mind is like a clear crystal and yet it is said to be "self-knowing, and self-illuminating" (Tib. *rang rig rang sal*). When one looks at mind, one can't find anything there. But mind is not like a total void or interruption of mental continuity, rather, mind is continual, it is always present. That uninterrupted presence is called luminosity. Similarly, if we examine our eye consciousnesses, we can't find anything whatsoever to that consciousness and yet before us are all kinds of continually appearing vivid images. If we examine the ear consciousness, we can't find it anywhere, but the sounds are still heard perfectly clearly. In the same way, when we examine the mental consciousness, we can't point to something and say, "Oh, *this* is mental consciousness." But mental consciousness is there continuously apprehending things and has a quality of continuous awareness and cognition. There is the "self-aware, self-luminous" quality of mind and this allows us to know our own luminous nature. It is like the light from a butter lamp. The natural radiance from a butter lamp is the aspect of clarity or luminosity.

83. Inexpressible, it is (like) the experience of a mute.

Whether we say, "the nature of mind has no intrinsic existence," that is, it is empty or we say, "the mind's continuity is uninterrupted," these are analogies for describing mind. We cannot say, "It is like this." It is ineffable, impossible to express in words just like the experience of a mute person who eats sugar for the first time and thinks it's really delicious but when asked what it is like, the mute person can only sit there in silence. So expressing the mind's nature is like the experience of a mute.

84. Unveiled, it is splendid transcendent wisdom.

According to the general view, all phenomena are emptiness. This view is usually arrived at by studying logical arguments. Through logic one examines the mind and sees that it has no identifiable essence. Then one concludes from this analysis that it is emptiness.

However, according to the secret mantra tradition (the Vajrayana), this view is not reached through logic, but rather through direct examination of the mind. By looking directly at mind, the emptiness of it is seen and then is understood. When emptiness is understood, one then realizes that "appearances are mind and mind is empty." One understands that mind is intrinsically non-existent. But this intrinsic non-existence is not simply empty. If one says, "it is not existent," it is still there. If one says, "it is existent," there is no thing there.

The line "Unveiled, it is splendid transcendent wisdom," means that this wisdom cannot be obscured by anything. "Transcendent wisdom" means that there is no person or thing or event that can block it. This luminosity of one's mind couldn't be blocked even if one tried. It is always naturally present without interruption. But the essence of this wisdom being unveiled does not mean it is really some actual thing. Its essence is empty, transparent, splendid, and luminous. It is called "clear light" (Tib. *ösal*), dharmakaya or sugatagarbha. Sugatagarbha is the potential or seed of the Buddha, sometimes called Buddha-nature.

85. Clear light, dharmakaya, sugatagarbha,
86. It is pure from the beginning and spontaneous.
87. Nobody can prove it by the use of examples,
88. No words can express it.
89. The dharmadhatu cannot be examined by logic.

This sugatagarbha is present and is "primordially pure" which is to say that it is flawless and unaffected by any negativity. At the same time, it is always spontaneously present, not created anew but naturally present. In the Middle-way Shentong view it is described as being by nature "completely pure" and "free from incidental blemish." So this kind of nature is described as "spontaneously present."

Many wise people have tried to give many examples about this state, but in fact these examples are completely inadequate. Nothing can point it out. For instance, we can use the analogy of a lump of gold buried beneath the ground for explaining the essence of sugatagarbha, but sugatagarbha is not really a big lump. One will never be capable of describing it.

There are nine examples in the *Uttaratantra*[16] that try to describe this Buddha-nature by trying first with one example, then with a second, and then a third and so on. However, if "no words can express it" whatever word one uses will not be right. One cannot say it is this or it isn't this. One cannot use any words. The line "cannot be examined by logic" means that aside from the direct experience in meditation, it cannot be identified through mental concepts. It is the dharmadhatu, the realm of reality.

90. This is laid down right at the beginning
91. One should dissipate all doubts.

In general, as explained above, from the aspect of luminosity it is called sugatagarbha. Words cannot explain it and examples cannot illustrate it; from this aspect of its intrinsic emptiness it is called "dharmadhatu." This is wisdom and realm (Skt. *dhatu*). Dharmadhatu is unimaginable, essentially emptiness. This needs to be "... laid down right at the beginning." This is extremely important for meditation.

All doubts or conceptual embellishments must subsequently be dissipated and one should not indulge in thoughts of "mind is this, it is not this." Let go of all such embellishments, recall experiencing mind. If one really practices meditation it will be extremely clear and all doubts are vanquished.

92. Maintaining meditation sustained by the view
93. Is like a garuda soaring to the sky,
94. Devoid of any fear or doubt

According to the sutra tradition, the establishment of the view depends on logical reasoning. In the mantra tradition, the view is based on the experience of meditation. Both of these traditions establish the view which is understood from looking at the clarity or luminous aspect of mind. In the sutra tradition, after contemplating it one thinks, "Oh, it seems to be like this" and establishes the view that way. In the mantra tradition, meditation leads one to the experience of the way it is and thus establishes the view that way. One needs a view or outlook on where one is going. If one has a good view, then one can maintain meditation to its end. If one has a good view and maintains the meditative experience, it is likened to the garuda soaring in space. The garuda glides beautifully and gracefully throughout the sky. If one doesn't have the habit of this experience, then one is always wondering whether one's meditation is correct, if it is good or bad, and so forth. Free of such thoughts, there is no anxiety, doubt, or fear. It is not like when we fly in an airplane and are afraid that it might crash!

95. Meditation without the view
96. Resembles a blind person entering a plain
97. There is no way to determine the correct path

Having "meditation without the view" means that if one doesn't develop the view and tries to meditate it won't work very well. It is like a blind man wandering on a huge plain who doesn't know whether he is on the right path or not and can't even decide which way to go. Without a view, meditation practice will not go well. One will not have a frame of reference to know where one is and where one is going.

98. If we have the view but cannot meditate
99. It is like a wealthy person consumed with avarice:
100. It does not yield results for himself and others
101. Practicing the union of both is the authentic view.

Having realized the view, unless one then meditates, the view is useless. It is like the rich man who is stingy so when he really needs money, he doesn't use it. Without meditation, there won't be any benefit, just like the money of a rich stingy man doesn't benefit anyone. Therefore, we should fully realize the view and meditate well with this view. The experience of this union of view and meditation is the way of great beings, and we can really achieve the path, and, like them, through this we can achieve the path.

102. This neutral state has an ignorant aspect,
103. Which for five reasons, one does not recognize one's own face.

So how does that basic confusion arise? As described before, the foundation consciousness is neutral but has an ignorant aspect to it. When we don't fully realize the nature of Mahamudra, the root of confusion is present in the eighth foundation consciousness. The root of this confusion is the five causes which obscure our true nature; five kinds of ego clinging which cause us to remain in samsara are:

(1) clinging to self, (2) being proud of our self, (3) being attached to self, (4) having an incorrect understanding about self, and (5) our mind being too luminous. With these five different causes, we develop clinging to the notion of self and experience excessive clarity and so on. Because we don't understand our own true essence of mind, we don't recognize our "own face." We loose the ability to recognize the intrinsic emptiness of mind which is the true nature of mind.

104. The ocean of co-emergent ignorance,
105. Is set in motion by waves of confused ego-clinging

When we lack this basic understanding of the true nature of mind, we develop a basic ignorance which is co-emergent with the eighth foundation consciousness.[17] This co-emergent ignorance is like waves occurring on the surface of an ocean.[18] Clinging to a self is like the waves on the ocean or the seventh afflictive consciousness that arises from the eighth foundation consciousness. The foundation consciousness from which the afflictive consciousness arises is not without confusion or ignorance. But this confusion caused by clinging to a self is not inherently virtuous or non-virtuous because both virtuous seeds (coming from virtuous actions) and non-virtuous seeds (coming from negative actions) can arise in it. The foundation consciousness is therefore classified as neutral. Because the seventh afflictive consciousness arises from the alaya consciousness, it also is neutral even though it is called the "afflictive" consciousness. The seventh consciousness contains the afflictive emotions so it is called "afflictive," but in essence it is neither virtuous or non-virtuous.[19] In general "neutral" refers to both neutral obscurations and neutral non-obscurations. The foundation consciousness is non-obscured neutral and the afflictive consciousness is obscured neutral.

The eighth foundation consciousness is somewhat obscured because all confused appearances of samsara arise in it. But these confused appearances are not recognized as such. The process works this way: First there's the mere appearance in consciousness and then the clarity of the appearance increases and the waves of self-clinging swell. The afflictive consciousness causes more and more clarity or luminosity. In the foundation consciousness there is only the mere arising of appearance without a great deal of clinging. The foundation consciousness is therefore known as "mere arising" (Tib. *shar tsham*). This mere arising is then not recognized as the beginning of the process of confusion.

106. Awareness becomes the "I" and its own luminosity becomes the objects.
107. The imprints of subject and object become solid.
108. So that karma is accumulated and brought to fruition
109. The water wheel of samsara turns continuously.

Next, describes the process of how appearances arise and lead to confusion rather than perceiving the true nature of reality. It begins when the eighth consciousness receives bewildered[20] thoughts of clinging to a self from the seventh afflictive consciousness. This causes the seventh consciousness to become clearer or more luminous causing the belief in a solid self to increase and for external phenomena to appear outside oneself as solid and real. This begins the duality of self and other.

Then based on this subject-object duality, karma is accumulated. Karma is accumulated because we begin to judge outside appearances as "good" and "bad" and begin accepting some appearances and rejecting others. This pushing away from what we think of as "bad" and being attracted and attached to what we think of as "good"

gradually leads to the disturbing emotions (or kleshas) of attachment aversion and ignorance. Then our actions based on these disturbing emotions causes us to experience their results (or karma). This causes cyclic existence to revolve just like a water wheel revolves.

110. While [samsara] is turning, its essence remains immaculate.
111. At the very instance of appearing, it [appearances] is devoid of true reality.

As explained previously, there is the alaya or foundation consciousness in which the afflicted consciousness causes confusion. In addition to the seventh afflicted consciousness, the six sense consciousnesses are also confused. Karma is then accumulated and the wheel of cyclic existence (samsara) turns. Although samsara appears to cycle in this way, the essence of the mind's actual nature is without blemish and its essence is absolutely pure. Thus the true nature is not covered by any disturbing emotions or faults. Since it is essentially stainless, the very arising of appearances are relative reality and empty of ultimate reality,[21] empty of any truth.

In general, in the Middle-way tradition, it is said that the essence of all appearing objects is empty. It is essentially empty, but this doesn't mean that these actual objects aren't there. These objects are empty only of their own nature. Appearances do continuously appear to mind, but they are empty of intrinsic nature. Therefore, "while appearing they are empty, while empty they appear." Appearances and emptiness are not contradictory.

112. Just appearance, they are the brilliance of the three kayas.

The basic nature of phenomena is essentially empty. This emptiness of essence is dharmakaya. Then the radiance is

unobstructed. This means that in the essential emptiness of this unborn nature there is nothing inhibiting or obstructing and it is therefore unobstructed. This unobstructed aspect or luminosity is the sambhogakaya. The dynamic energy (Tib. *tsal*) that arises from this in various ways or emanations is the nirmanakaya.[22]

113. The nature of their arising is unborn.
114. The unborn cannot be obstructed.
115. Between these two, there is no abiding.

First of all, appearances are essentially empty but even mere appearances are the manifestation of the three kayas. Furthermore, appearances have three characteristics, which are: unborn, unceasing, and not abiding. Being unborn, there is no beginning and hence no end, and in between these there is nowhere to abide. In the past they are unborn, in the future unceasing, and in the present not abiding so they are completely free of the three times of past, present, and future.

Unobstructed just means that if their essence is empty, then there is nothing to obstruct it. If it were a solid object, then it could be blocked or obstructed. But being empty it is unobstructed. Unobstructed mind does not have to do with whether outside objects exist or not, but the fact that the mind is empty by nature means that it can arise or manifest as anything. It is not obstructed by its own nature, whatsoever. It is empty. It may seem from our experience that our mind (or thinking) is created by perception of external objects and therefore we experience mind by perceiving an object. But actually it is the other way around: when we have direct experience of mind, we find out that the experience of objects is due to the mind. First, the objects are recognized as mind and then with closer examination we discover that mind is essentially empty, which is why it is

unobstructed, unborn, endless, and does not dwell anywhere. This is because there is nothing there to be born, to abide, and to die.

When saying mind is unobstructed we are talking about the essence of mind, not that the mind is a permanent thing. We are talking about the essential emptiness of mind. But from the emptiness any amount of prajna or jnana can arise.

Two aspects to mind are emptiness and unobstructedness. The emptiness is like it is—its nature, but through ignorance we conceive of objects and phenomena outside ourselves. With this confusion of I and other, karma eventually begins to accumulate. The outside objects don't really exist, but we believe they exist and karma develops from this false belief. But actually it is the essence of mind which is the root or foundation of the whole thing. It is like the foundation from which all karma comes.[23] That is why it is so important to meditate on mind, because that is the very root of the process of creating karma.

It is just like the example of television, you can see what is happening in India or Russia or America. This creates all these endless manifestations, but if we suddenly turn the television off, it appears to be all gone. In the same way, we have to recognize what is projecting all these manifestations. We need to get right to the root, which is the mind, and cut this off. Cutting off at the root is like unplugging the television.

116. From this mind itself, so hard to describe,
117. The various displays of samsara and nirvana arise.

The essential quality of mind is emptiness and this is difficult or impossible to express. It is hard to say specifically that it is this or that. Yet it is the basis for the manifestation of all samsara and all nirvana. From the basic nature of mind, in cyclic existence, the various

appearances arise and when there is transcendence of the cycle of samsara, then the various qualities of nirvana arise. So the mind is the source of various appearances.

118. Seeing them as self-liberating is the highest view.
119. If it is recognized, all is suchness.
120. If there is nothing to refute or establish, it is the innate state.
121. When conceptual mind is transcended, there is the ultimate.

Foundation Mahamudra is concerned with the way of realizing the view of this basic nature. Path Mahamudra is concerned with how one goes about realizing that the mind is self-liberated and how all these various appearances of samsara and nirvana arise. On the relative level these appearances bind us, but on the absolute level they do not bind us.[24] The mind is self-liberating means it has always been like it is. It is like pounding a heap of ashes—no matter how hard you pound, you still only get ashes. Self-liberation then is the ultimate view when conventional mind is transcended.

Understanding mind as self-liberating is the understanding of everything. If this is recognized as the nature of all things then outer phenomena and inner mind are realized as this very suchness. Then there is no longer anything to accept or reject. This is the innate nature of mind which is completely beyond any intellectual process, completely beyond mind, it is the absolute natural state. If in one-pointed concentration or samadhi one realizes this basic nature, then it is said one has realized the ultimate nature of reality. This completes the discussion of ground Mahamudra.

4
Path Mahamudra

II. Path Mahamudra

Of the three major sections in *The Song of Lodro Thaye*—ground Mahamudra, path Mahamudra, and fruition Mahamudra—we are in path Mahamudra, which has three parts: the meaning of meditation, the actual practice; the various obstacles and errors that can occur in the practice of Mahamudra and; the progress through the actual stages.

122. Path Mahamudra refers to
123. The Mahamudra of mind itself and the Mahamudra of apparent existence.
124. Spontaneous mind is the dharmakaya.
125. Spontaneous appearances are the light of the dharmakaya.

The section on path Mahamudra begins with a discussion of two aspects of the path of Mahamudra. The first aspect is the mind itself and the second is all appearances. In the exceptional teachings of the Kagyu tradition, the first aspect is called "the Mahamudra of co-emergent mind itself" and the second aspect is called the "Mahamudra of co-emergent appearance." The first is looking inwardly at the grasping mind and placing it in a state of meditation,

which leads to spontaneous mind itself. Secondly, directing one's attention outwardly to objective appearances and meditating on phenomena leads to the realization of spontaneous or co-emergent appearances. But these two are not essentially any different because basically this co-emergent mind itself is dharmakaya and the co-emergent appearances are like the radiance or the result of dharmakaya. So there is really no difference between these two.

The Tibetan word *lhen chig* (together or co-emergent, also translated as spontaneous) in Mahamudra terms means that this basic nature and the essential essence of one's own mind arises together. The first syllable *lhen* simply means basically "two things, not one thing." The second syllable *chig* means "one" or "single." So *lhen chig* means "two together as one," neither two or just one. Co-emergence is not two things because they are essentially the same and it is not a single thing because there are two aspects to it. In terms of the mind, one can say "mind" and "its basic nature" are not two separate things, but they are also not a single thing. In the same way, "appearances" and the "essence of appearances" are not two separate things and not one thing.

126. When the blessings of the glorious lamas
127. And one's own karmic dispositions come together
128. One sees one's own face as if meeting an old acquaintance.

We need to recognize our own nature in this way. How do we recognize it? There are two conditions that are necessary: first, the blessing of the glorious lamas. Depending on one's devotion and faith in the lamas, one can receive their blessings. Second, one can have good fortune; karmic readiness by having previously entered the door of dharma, met lamas, listened to dharma, practiced diligently, and being interested in samadhi. This is the good fortune

of being receptive. So if these two conditions exist, Mahamudra is revealed and one recognizes it in the way one recognizes an old acquaintance. That is, like seeing someone you've met before and recalling, "Oh yes, I know you!" Like this example, the basic nature of the mind is recognized.

129. Endless explanation is useless,
130. The beginner needs a starting point.
131. Don't welcome or dwell on thoughts of past and future.

There is no point in looking for much explanation of Mahamudra. In short, the practice arises out of confidence, faith, and diligence and other than that there is really no point in endless explanation. Therefore, it is through meditation that recognition of the true nature takes place. What the beginner needs are methods to put into practice. For instance, one needs to practice the four common preliminary practices (four thoughts that turn the mind), the uncommon preliminary practices (Tib. *Ngöndro*), and the practice of tranquility meditation (Skt. *Shamatha*). The beginner needs various kinds of techniques. First the mind must be brought to rest based on various techniques in the samadhi of tranquility meditation.

In Shamatha practice, but not exclusively in Shamatha practice, it is taught "Don't embrace thoughts of the past." This means not to dwell on all the things one has done. Those thoughts should be temporarily set aside. Also set aside what one has just recently done. Similarly, don't think about what one is going to do the next day, making plans, and so forth. One also shouldn't dwell on the present by thinking about what one is doing right now, such as thinking that one is sitting and meditating. So this is giving up thoughts of past and future in one's meditation.

132. In each moment, there is the mind of nowness.

So how should we meditate? If we consider the past and the future, then discursive thinking takes over. We begin to think, "this happened to me" or "I'm going to do this" and soon we are lost in many discursive thoughts. So don't think about the past or the future. Then we have awareness of the present (Tib. *dantar gyi shepa*). This awareness of the present is the momentary awareness of this very present instant. If one looks at this instant right now, then discursive thought will naturally not arise. Sometimes we call this awareness "fresh" (Tib. *soma*), which basically means "new" and this refers to the moment when discursive thoughts haven't yet arrived and there is just the freshness of the present awareness. So it is called "the instant of awareness of the present." An instant is of very, very brief duration and we should remain in the essence of this infinitely brief instant of present awareness.

133. In the continual, innate state
134. There is not the slightest thing for mind to meditate on,
135. Or for getting lost for a moment in the confusion of wandering thought.

The awareness of the present should be completely unfabricated. There is nothing to create, just rest in the fundamental nature in whatever is the essence of what is, rather than thinking, "I will meditate," "I will realize emptiness," "I will contemplate clearly," or "I will do it like this." We must rest in the mind's own basic nature, the natural fundamental state which is uncontrived. Then as the text says, "there is not the slightest thing for mind to meditate on" which means there is actually no meditation.

Although there is nothing to meditate on, this is not distraction. If in this state of awareness we are distracted or waver, then we go astray. The text says not to get "lost for a moment in the confusion of wandering thought." Through steady mindful awareness we simply abide in the natural fundamental state of the present moment, without falling into distraction. Not only that, but do not fall off even for an instant, because even in that instant of distraction the basic nature of mind is lost.

Now ordinary mind[25] (Tib. *thamal gyi shepa*) and freshness (Tib. *soma*) are a way of seeing the essence of mind in its uncontrived state. Seeing that essence, if you don't rely on mindfulness and awareness, it will instantly disintegrate. Once it is lost, you are just an ordinary person. Therefore, you must always guard mindfulness and awareness. Always rest in the freshness of the present moment without contrivance or wavering—always maintain that.

"Uncontrived" means that the mind itself is not following after thoughts, that is, its nature or essence is uncontrived. Within this uncontrived state, one abides always. Usually mind is producing a lot of thoughts and this is what we mean by contrived. We remember things and we fabricate or make up many things. Being uncontrived means cultivating just the essential nature of mind.

In some commentaries, it says that mindfulness and awareness are compared to a spy—someone who watches carefully without drawing any attention to themselves, so they won't get caught.

136. [For the mind to be] Without distraction, without meditation or fabrication is essential,
137. Fresh, relaxed and naturally clear.

There are six essential points in resting or placing the mind: (1) without distraction, (2) without meditation, (3) non-fabricated, (4)

to have a fresh mind, (5) to have a relaxed mind, and (6) for the mind to be naturally clear.

These six essential points can be condensed into three important points. The meditation instructions are to be undistracted and rest in freshness of mind. If one's mind wanders off, then one's state feels old and stale. Therefore, being without distraction, stay in the awareness of "nowness," and being in the present instant without wandering off is dwelling in freshness. Thus, (1) "without distraction" and (4) "freshness" are related and summarized in the first point. Secondly, when resting in this fresh, present state there is not the slightest thing for mind to meditate on. This is non-meditation. This means that, other than resting in the basic nature of awareness itself, there is no particular object at all on which to meditate or anything to do. So we just relax as we are without any contrivance. So (2) "without meditation" can be joined to (5) "relaxation" as the second point. The third is non-fabrication, nothing to make, so there is natural clarity. This meditation is extremely clear and pure. When you are caught up in fabrication, this clarity and purity don't occur. If you're not making up anything, then meditation is naturally clear and pure. So, (3) without fabrication and (6) rest in innate clarity are the third point.

138. In the space of the three doors of freedom,
139. Carefully establish mindfulness and awareness.

Meditating with these six methods, the text says, "(rest) in the space of the three doors to freedom," which refers to the first three methods of non-distraction, non-meditation, and non-fabrication. In other texts the three doors to freedom are usually listed as the causes free of characteristics, the fruition free of aspiration, and the essence, emptiness. However, in Jamgon Kongtrul's text this refers

to non-distraction, non-meditation and non-fabrication. When Jamgon Kongtrul refers to the space of the three doors, he is referring to the mind when it is beyond thoughts of past, present, and future, like complete space. So the space of non-distraction, non-meditation, and non-fabrication is maintained by mindfulness and awareness. Mindfulness and awareness are extremely important in all meditation practice. For instance, in the *Bodhisattva's Way of Life* Shantideva honors those who meditate with a guarded mind with hands folded, praying to them, to maintain mindfulness and awareness because it is absolutely necessary on the path. He advises them to guard their mindfulness and awareness more carefully than even their very life.

Shantideva gives the example that the mind is like a door with mindfulness and awareness the guards at the door. For instance, in a house everyone must come through the door whether they are an important guest or a thief. So the door is very important. If thieves see that there is a very strong or powerful guard there they won't attempt to break in. On the other hand, if they see that there is no guard or a very weak one, they will go ahead and attempt to break in and steal. The disturbing emotions and discursive thoughts are like the thieves or bandits that are trying to steal. Mindfulness and awareness are like the guard at the door preventing things from being stolen. We can also say the mind is like a bank. Mindfulness is like a guard at the door of the bank that needs to be very powerful and well equipped with a gun. If the guard isn't powerful and vigilant, he can't protect the bank. Sometimes mindfulness is lost, like in an Indian bank. In India the guard of a bank is supposed to be guarding against thieves and bandits but he is also a dangerous person because he has a gun. He might just come in and hold up the bank himself. So they have the gun chained to a pillar outside the door so he can still brandish it around, but he can't go anywhere with it himself. This example shows that as well as the guard of

mindfulness, we also need awareness to make sure that the mindfulness is taking place properly.

140. The balance of mind between tight and loose must always be kept.
141. Thus subtle, gross and strong thoughts will be pacified.

With careful mindfulness and awareness, the mind should be in a state of being perfectly toned, neither too loose nor too tight; being perfectly balanced between those two at all times. In this way all the different kinds of thoughts, subtle discursive thoughts, more obvious and very powerful thoughts, will all eventually be pacified.

142. Remain in the state of natural, uncontrived mind.
143. Gradually, the four grades of experience will arise.

When thoughts are thus pacified, one can abide within an uncontrived, natural state. If one is meditating in that state, the experience is of greater and greater clarity and gradually the four stages of experience will arise in succession. First one's meditative experience is "the waterfall from a high cliff" which is the experience of first meditating, because it seems that one has many more thoughts and mental disturbances than before one began meditating. If one tries to meditate, everything seems much more turbulent than before. But in fact it is not more turbulent, it is just that one has now taken a look at the mind and naturally understands what it is like. So one is now more aware of all the turbulent and subtle thoughts that arise. The second stage is the stage of "the flow of a river." It is like a great river that is somewhat calmer and more peaceful, slowly moving towards the sea. The third stage is "an ocean without waves" where the mind is completely still and stabilized like a still ocean. The fourth stage is "the sky without clouds" which

is an absolutely transparent, clear state, much like water evaporating off the ocean.

144. The sun of luminosity will continuously shine
145. And the root of Mahamudra meditation will have been planted.
146. If it is lacking, talk of higher realization
147. Resembles building a castle without a foundation.

After these four experiences have gradually come about in succession, finally the stage of clear light will take place, or as the text says, "the sun of luminosity continuously shine." The mind will abide constantly, just like a sun that doesn't rise and set, but is always present in a state of clarity. When that happens, one has established the foundation of the meditation of Mahamudra. It is stabilized and the root has been planted.

Without having a true or abiding experience of the meditation of Mahamudra arising in one's stream of being, just imaging that "I have a great experience" won't work. It is just like building a house without a foundation. A house needs a strong foundation and without it will never be solid or strong.

148. Yet being too attached to it is an activity of mara.

There are certain experiences (Tib. *nam*) that occur when the mind is already in great clarity. If these experiences occur, it is very good. However, we must not become attached to these experiences. As soon as we start to have thoughts like, "This is really important. I have attained great clarity" or "I have attained stability of mind," then this is called "an activity of mara." The *maras* were the negative forces that tried to keep the Buddha from reaching enlightenment. They are not an external demon as they are

sometimes portrayed. A mara is more an obstacle to a spiritual practice or to our samadhi meditation.

Sometimes we may have very good meditation with good experiences. Many people repeat that their meditation goes very well with either good clarity or good abiding; then one day they can't seem to retrieve it. One day it is good, then it won't happen again. This can create a great deal of hope and anxiety, creating a problem in our meditation. We become attached to the good experiences and worry about the bad ones. Actually, our view should be that whatever experience arises in the mind doesn't matter. If a good experience arises, that's very good; if a bad experience arises, it doesn't make any difference. This is because the mind is basically a collection of all kinds of experiences—good and bad and mixed experiences—that constantly arise and there is really no difference of what kind of experience it is. Nagarjuna says these meditative experiences and people are like mangos. Mangos often look ripe on the outside, but when they are opened, they may not be ripe. At other times, mangos look like they are not ripe on the outside, but upon opening them they are very ripe. So it is with mind—sometimes it has good experiences, sometimes it has bad experiences, sometimes it only seems to be good or only seems to be bad. But essentially, there really isn't any difference between these two conditions.

149. Those who have studied little, but apply great effort
150. Are often seduced by seeming virtues,
151. Guiding themselves and others to the lower realms.

We shouldn't have any attachment to whatever experience arises. Someone who perseveres with effort for a while and feels something has happened in their meditation experience might become very confused by the experience and start to develop pride, thinking, "Now

I really have good qualities." Then that good experience itself leads to confusion so that they are "guiding themselves and others to the lower realms." So it is important not to become too attached to any experience.

152. Bliss, clarity, and non-thought may be wonderful experiences,
153. But they are causes of samsara if one clings to them.

Even the very excellent experiences that occur in samadhi such as bliss, clarity and non-thought can be the actual cause of samsara if there is any kind of fixation or attachment to these experiences. It is important never to get attached in this way.

So, in summary, this chapter described the meaning and actual practice of meditation and the possible ways to go astray and the mistakes that can happen, and how to avoid them.

Questions

Question: What is the relationship between "co-emergent mind" and what is called "ordinary mind."

Rinpoche: The relationship between co-emergence and "ordinary mind" or *thamal gyi shepa* in Tibetan is that they are pretty much the same thing. Generally, co-emergence is used to describe the true nature of things. *Thamal gyi shepa* is a very special term used by some of the Kagyu lamas because if you have some kind of hope when you meditate that you really are going to meditate on this fantastic state, on this nature of mind, this wonderful state of mind, it could put one into a bad frame of mind. To keep people from looking forward to this great fantastic thing, certain Kagyu lamas began to use this very uncommon word so that meditators would

not have so much hope, because it is actually just very ordinary, normal mind. The idea of co-emergence (*lhen chig*) sounds very esoteric and difficult to understand, very far away. However, if we translate it as ordinary mind (*thamal gyi shepa*) it is easier to understand, just the uncontrived mind that one already has.

Question: How do we deal with anger using this Mahamudra approach?
Rinpoche: Looking at the essence of anger—if you have the introduction or transmission then there is nothing there, and if you realize that, it is pretty much Mahamudra. Usually all the things that occur in the mind, whatever they are, happiness, sadness, and so forth, you should regard them essentially as, "wind moving in space," as it says in some commentaries. No matter how much wind blows in space, nothing is harmed. In that way, when kleshas or happiness or sadness arise there is no problem whatsoever. You have to realize that. You have to stabilize it, you have to meditate.

Question: Could you please explain the relationship between having the view and meditating
Rinpoche: First there is the sutra tradition according to the view of Middle-way, there is emptiness, and emptiness is like such and such. There is the Buddha-nature which pervades all beings, and it is like such and such. Clearly contemplating these things is a kind of understanding that comes from mental activity. Thinking about it and figuring it out— "this must be what it is like" and so on, then a kind of experience takes place.

Secondly, based on experience, then an authentic lama gives a pointing out experience of mind's nature. Whether or not the individual has a good understanding of the texts or not, the lama says, "Sit here, look at your mind and meditate!" Then the lama

asks, "What arises?" "What is mind?" "What is it like?" "Where is it?" Some lamas like Trungpa Rinpoche give an introduction to ordinary mind. This is giving the view based on experience. Once you have this view, then you meditate on it. So it is the view based on the introduction or transmission, and is followed up by meditation.

Question: Why is view and meditation inseparable?
Rinpoche: View is like the door. Then contemplating again and again, eventually, whenever you meditate it is there. When the view is first introduced it is not yet stable. You think, "Oh yes, that is probably so" or, "Oh, maybe not, that is not really it" and so on, with many fluctuations. Then when you have meditational experience of it, whenever you meditate, you arrive exactly right on it.

Question: Do the four experiences come after mind is abiding in its own place?
Rinpoche: The Tibetan word *rang bab* means falling on itself or, by itself, and refers to the natural essence of mind. Abiding in that means that if you can maintain it, it will gradually increase and grow until you are actually abiding in it. So the four experiences describe that process. The essence is revealed, but then practice makes it actually happen. Just by persevering in meditation the four experiences will arise by stages.

5

Obstacles in the Practice of Mahamudra

II. Path Mahamudra

We are continuing with the explanation of path Mahamudra, and the second of the three parts, the various obstacles and errors that can occur in the practice of Mahamudra.

154. Having hammered the nail of devotion into your heart
155. When rock hits bone in natural awareness
156. The ultimate lineage of blessing is transferred.

The main methods for avoiding obstructions and errors to spiritual practice are devotion and perseverance. With these two qualities, the blessings of realization are transferred to our mind stream and obstructions and errors are eliminated.

When the text says to fix or even hammer in the nail of devotion into one's heart, it is stressing devotion. How should we develop devotion and nail it to our heart? Just as when you nail some object in place so that it becomes very strong and immovable, in the same way, if we have intense devotion then our mind becomes extremely

strong and stable. So, in general, the method for attaining stability is to develop this unshakable devotion.

Once we have nailed devotion to our heart, then, "rock hits bone in natural awareness." Only when rock hits bone at exactly the right place will it break. It is an old example for precision. If we have devotion, stability of mind, and great perseverance, then the blessings of the absolute lineage are transferred. These blessings are as if the realization of the lineage masters, from Vajradhara right down to our own root lama, all that experiential realization that is in the mind streams of all those lamas, is transferred to our own mind stream, and arises in us.

157. Not getting lost in the four types of deviations,

To achieve the realization of the absolute lineage we must eliminate the four deviations (Tib. *shorba*). These deviations all have to do with incorrectly understanding emptiness. The first deviation we must eliminate is getting lost in emptiness as the basis of things. This is thinking that there is really nothing at all—there are no appearances, no emptiness, nothing exists at all. It is when we really don't understand the true nature of emptiness and we cling to the idea of it as nothing at all. This error in understanding is the first deviation.

Second is the deviation of getting lost in emptiness as the path. This occurs when we believe that emptiness means that there is no such thing as accumulating merit or accumulating negative karma. Believing this, we don't accumulate positive actions and avoid negative ones. In other words, the deviation is not taking into account karmic cause and effect and this is the second deviation on the path.

The third deviation is believing that emptiness is the remedy. When we do not believe emptiness is the natural state of both the disturbing emotions and the remedies we make a mistake; we do not understand that what is to be eliminated and its remedy are inseparable in essence. The deviation is that one may think every time a disturbing emotion arises we have to meditate on emptiness using emptiness as a remedy. This is not the correct attitude because this way we do not recognize the essence, we only use a concept of emptiness as a seeming opposite.

The fourth deviation is applying the label or seal of emptiness. This occurs when a thought arises and we think that this or that is emptiness, or we do some work and think "this is emptiness." First we cling to the idea that external phenomena are real things, then when we learn about emptiness, we begin to think that everything is emptiness. This way of intellectualizing isn't any good either.

158. Not falling into the three errors,

Based on the blessings, one won't stray into these four deviations, and then not fall into the three errors. The four deviations relate to the practice of Vipashyana, and the three errors to Shamatha.

The three errors relate to the three kinds of temporary experiences one can have in Shamatha practice: bliss, clarity, and non-thought. One shouldn't have attachment to these experiences. If the experience of bliss arises, don't be attached to it. If experiences of clarity or non-thought arise, it is necessary to be unattached. If, however, one is attached to the experience of bliss, then within the three realms of existence, one will not be able to go beyond the Desire Realm. If there is attachment to the experience of clarity, one will not transcend the Form Realm. And if there is attachment

to the experience of non-thought, one cannot pass beyond the Formless Realm. So with attachment to bliss, one errs or is caught in the Desire Realm, with attachment to clarity one errs or is caught in the Form Realm, and with attachment to non-thought one errs or is caught in the Formless Realm.[26]

159. Surpassing the four joys, free from the three conditions,

So the biggest faults are the four deviations and the three errors. If we avoid the four deviations and the three errors, then we experience going beyond the four joys. The four joys are part of the path of means which is the practice of working with the subtle energies using the prana, the bindus, and the nadis. The four experiences or joys are: sublime joy; exceptional joy; transcendent joy and; free of joy, which means going even beyond joy. In general, these four joys relate to the path of means, the practices concerning channels and winds (prana). However, the kind of realization that is generated here is beyond the four joys.

One should also be "free from the three conditions" (Tib. *rkyen gsum*). The three conditions or temporary experiences (Tib. *nams*) are, again, bliss, clarity and non-thought. In the previous instance, the three experiences were mentioned in the context of attachment to the experience in meditation, which would be the cause of continued cycling in the three realms. Here, this freedom from the three conditions should be understood to mean that these temporary experiences will dissipate by themselves; the experience neither benefits nor harms, they occur naturally. When this has occurred, it is "freedom from the three conditions." In general, these experiences are considered good. However, they can cause the meditation to be unstable. If there is freedom from these three experiences and one is

just naturally happy, relaxed and peaceful, our meditation will be without a problem.

160. And connecting with the three ways of arising,
161. We won't be troubled by the mind of the three great ones.

"Connecting with the three ways of arising" refers to the three ways that good qualities, described previously, can arise. They can arise either gradually in stages, by leaping over (Tib. *togyal*) or, arise all at once. Usually, the qualities arise gradually in stages, but sometimes they "leap over," that is, they skip a stage and go directly to the next one. It is like climbing a ladder and you skip one or two of the rungs. Finally, there are times when the qualities of practice arise all at the same time without going through the stages.

Not being "troubled by the mind of the three great ones" refers to being free of the three faults of the three stages of practice. The first stage (or first prajna) arises as the result of listening to the teachings. Listening or learning means the mere understanding that arises from reading a lot of books. Sometimes this kind of understanding is confused with real experiential realization. One needs to get beyond knowledge. This kind of knowledge of purely intellectual understanding won't help. So confusing intellectual understanding with real understanding can cause the first fault. The second stage of practice comes from contemplation of what we have heard. This understanding based on analytical reasoning can also be confused with realization. This also must be transcended. Third is the experience that comes from meditation. At first there are various temporary experiences that arise in meditation that are not true realization. We must develop the realization that transcends various transitory meditational experiences. So being untroubled by the three great ones refers to: realization beyond any exaggeration in listening,

in contemplating, or in meditation, not mistaking their positive result for the realization itself. In practicing Mahamudra meditation, we need to make these clear distinctions between these faults and the qualities of true realization.

162. The self-arisen nature is not changed by experiences.
163. It resembles the center of a cloudless sky.

Jamgon Kongtrul then says "the self-arisen nature is not changed by experiences." This is the realization of the real, genuine character of the true nature, not simply one's meditative experiences. When that is realized, it is like "the center of a cloudless sky," which is extremely open, clear and transparent without limit or disturbing perceptions.

164. Self-aware, self-illuminating, it can't be put in words.
165. It is primordial wisdom beyond analogy or concepts.

Our intrinsic awareness (Tib. *rigpa*) that arises naturally from our realization is naturally clear or self-illuminating (Tib. *rang gsel*). It is impossible to describe this nature of mind either in words or analogy or concepts. We cannot find any example which can accurately describe primordial wisdom.

166. The nakedness of ordinary mind
167. Without anything to understand or to boast about,
168. Is clearly seen as the dharmakaya.

This primordial wisdom is "the nakedness of ordinary mind." It is ordinary mind or the nature of the mind itself in its natural state without any contrivance or contortion. Stark or "naked" means

without any discursive thoughts or concepts. One must really see the essential nature of the mind, so it is naked.

Since it is naked, and therefore clear, there is nothing to understand and be arrogant about. There being nothing to understand means the mind is there so clearly one automatically understands "this seems to be ordinary mind." But it is not like that. Arrogance or self-righteousness is when one thinks for sure, "Ah hah, this is really it," and deciding that is it. Without these two attitudes, just the naked experience and the appreciation of it without being corrupted by those two faulty positions of concepts and false certainty, when one really sees naked ordinary mind, then it is the actual vision of dharmakaya.

169. The six sense objects appear like the moon in water,
170. In the sphere of primordial wisdom.

At that point we will be free of any faults or problems. The text says, "the six sense objects appear like the moon in water." When we have reached the level of primordial wisdom (Tib. *yeshe*), although we see sights, hears sounds, smell smells, taste flavors, feel objects of touch, and have various thoughts arise in our consciousness, the various perceptions of the six senses are like the moon appearing in a still lake at night. The moon does indeed appear in the water, but there is no power to it and no actual thing there. It is just a reflection. In the same way, when we actually realize the naked ordinary mind, we shall experience the perceptions of the six senses, they will still arise, but there is no attachment to them, no harm done by them, and they make no great impact on us.

For this reason when beautiful and desirable objects are seen, there is no reaction of desire and attachment. When disgusting or ugly sights are seen, no anger or hatred arises. There is just the natural

state, like seeing the moon in water which is "the sphere of primordial wisdom" meaning that everything arises within wisdom and then naturally subsides, without attachment. There is just arising and natural subsiding.

171. Whatever arises is unfabricated, the innate state.
172. Whatever is perceived has the nature of Mahamudra.
173. The phenomenal world is the great bliss of the dharmakaya.

Externally, all the outer objects of the senses and, internally, the thoughts arising to consciousness are, without any fabrication at all, they just naturally arise without attachment. The arising is naturally in its basic true nature, without contrivance. For this reason, whether the outer objects of perception or the inner thoughts, all are the nature of Mahamudra. If we can maintain this state then we will realize the nature of Mahamudra.

Then "the phenomenal world is the great bliss of the dharmakaya." Whatever appears and arises in samsara is naturally seen as the dharmakaya. And since the dharmakaya is completely free from suffering, it is great bliss.

174. Meditation finding naturally its own place is Shamatha,
175. Seeing the unseeable nature is Vipashyana
176. In all phases of stillness, movement and awareness
177. These two are not separate, but coincide.

When we reach this state of seeing everything as the dharmakaya, we begin to meditate on the union of Shamatha and Vipashyana. This meditation is an undisturbed state (Shamatha) and, understanding the actual meaning of seeing the unseen (Vipashyana); realizing the natural abiding state of Shamatha and Vipashyana

manifest in seeing the unseen true nature of mind. These two must arise together.

In general, there are three phases of mind: stillness, mental activity, and awareness. The first, stillness, arises during Shamatha meditation, and one has the experience of "now my mind is still, it is abiding." Secondly, there is movement or mental activity, when the mind is not still, but thoughts are active. Without any investigation the mind appears to be in one of these two states: either still or moving. However, when we really investigate what the difference between the still and moving mind is, we find that their essence is actually the same! If there is stillness, one can't say "this is the stillness," if there is movement, one can't point to the movement. Because the essence of stillness and movement is the same, this is awareness. Seeing that the nature of these two is no different represents awareness, the third phase. But this implies that:

178. The confusion of discursive thought is not to be abandoned
179. The virtuous action of the antidotes cannot be achieved.
180. The time will come when you arrive naturally at this state.

Stillness, movement, and awareness are not separate states of mind but a unity. We should realize the essential sameness of all three of them. Movement is no different than stillness, and when stillness occurs, it is no different than movement; they are the same. Thoughts arise, but if we are aware of this identity of the essence of stillness and movement, then the emanations of discursive thought need not be rejected. Even though thoughts are arising they do not really change the nature of mind. So there is no need to reject them, there are no antidotes to be applied to them. Eventually we will naturally rest in this state.

181. When you are well established in this realization,
182. You'll never be outside of meditation
183. At the borderline between freedom and attainment
184. Even meditation itself has no existence.

When the realization of Mahamudra becomes stable and goes well and no other obstacles or faults can occur, when we can really meditate on whether thoughts are still or moving, when we can meditate in good conditions or terrible conditions, then there is the meditative state only and we will never be outside meditation, because everything is meditation without a single thing not being meditation. At that time we will be "at the borderline between freedom and attainment" meaning we cannot say we are free of meditation or without meditation nor can we define the meditation itself in any way.

185. But beginners, whose discursive mind has not subsided
186. Should highly cherish meditation.

Beginners who have many discursive thoughts must really meditate.

6
Progress Through the Various Stages

II. Path Mahamudra

THIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES HOW WE gradually progress through the stages of realization. It is the third section of the path Mahamudra.

187. By means of meditation, experiences come up.
188. Experiences arise as adornments of awareness.

For the beginner, meditation is very important and it gives rise to experience. Of course, the experience doesn't always seem like a good experience. Sometimes the experience arising from meditation can be the feeling of meditation getting more difficult. Sometimes we feel we have progressed, sometimes we feel we are getting worse. However, these experiences are just effects of the meditation and we should not worry about them. Rather, we should just be aware of them and see them as useful, irrespective of whether they seem good or bad: They are just due to meditation.

In the practice of meditation, both the awareness of the nature of mind and the experiences that arise through meditation are

mutually conducive. They help each other. The experiences of meditation, whether good or bad experiences, enhance the awareness of the nature of mind. If we look at it from this point of view they function as adornments of our awareness.

189. If one wants to divide the path, there are four yogas:

Stage by stage the experiences and realizations gradually increase. In Buddhism these are usually classified into *five paths* and the ten bodhisattva levels (Skt. *bhumi*) that the practitioner passes through on the way to realization. Similarly, based on the experience of Mahamudra that the great meditators and great lamas had, the stages of Mahamudra were divided into four stages called the four yogas.

Yoga is a Sanskrit word for "unity" and this was translated into Tibetan as *naljor*. The way that yoga is used in Hinduism is different from the way it is used in Buddhism. Generally, yoga is thought of in terms of physical exercises or the method of using various exercises to attain mastery over the body. This is not what "yoga" means in Buddhism at all. In Tibetan *nal* means the true state, the essence, the nature of mind. The second syllable *jor* means "to engage" or "to apply." So *nal jor* means "to reach a certain level of realization based on the experience of the nature of the mind." In the case of the four yogas it means the progressive refining of the experience of the natural state (Tib. *nalma*), where it is actualized progressively in four parts.

190. Knowing mind's own face is "one-pointedness"
191. And has lesser, intermediate and greater stages.

The Mahamudra path is special, meaning it is not shared by other Buddhist meditations. The first yoga or stage is called one-pointedness. This occurs after having been introduced to the nature

of mind or given the transmission of the ordinary mind. There is some actual recognition of ordinary mind, the nature of mind. This is further divided into the lesser, the medium, and the greater stage of one-pointedness.

The lesser one-pointedness is the experience of the alternating experiences of bliss and luminosity. Sometimes one experiences bliss, sometimes one experiences luminosity, sometimes neither. The medium one-pointedness occurs when one gains some control over meditation, by settling the mind in equipoise. In the beginning of trying to meditate one wants to stay one-pointedly in meditation but one cannot. One wants to achieve good samadhi, yet one hasn't the ability. Even when trying to rest the mind in calm abiding, it doesn't dwell in one place. In the stage of the medium one-pointedness one has some control and power over one's samadhi and one's ability to meditate, so that one can meditate whenever one wishes.

192. Seeing bliss and luminosity in alternation,
193. Obtaining mastery over the concentration of meditative equipoise.
194. And uninterrupted experience of luminous appearances.

The experience of the greater one-pointedness occurs with the arising of luminosity, of great clear light. Of the two experiences of emptiness and luminosity, luminosity is getting very strong and arises very powerfully at this point. There is no longer a difference of whether there is samadhi or no samadhi: one abides in this experience of luminosity continuously.

195. Realizing the rootlessness of mind is "no elaboration"
196. And has lesser, intermediate, and greater stages:
197. Realizing that arising, ceasing and abiding are empty,

As one's experience is enhanced continuously, the second yoga is called the stage of simplicity, the stage without conception or elaboration. This is when the real realization of emptiness, the realization that the mind is without root, without a basis, becomes a strong experience. This stage is also divided into three levels of experience: the lesser, the medium, and the greater experience. The lesser stage of "no elaboration" is the realization of the emptiness of any event in the mind such as the arising, abiding, and cessation of thoughts. Realizing the mind without foundation means that at the beginning there was nothing arising; in the end there is nothing that could cease and in the middle there is nothing abiding.

198. Being free from the fundamental root of clinging to appearances or clinging to emptiness,
199. And cutting through all exaggerations caused by elaborating on phenomena.

The medium level of no elaboration comes about after the realization of no origination, no cessation, and no abiding. The clinging to external appearances or objects disappears because one recognizes the emptiness of all external phenomena. Clinging to thinking all phenomena are empty is also transcended. So one's experience is completely free of clinging to appearances or clinging to emptiness.

The final level of this stage is cutting completely through all designations or all embellishment of all dharmas, of all phenomena. "All phenomena" means not only external objects, but also the mind. So any extreme view is cut through, such as thinking that (a) it exists or (b) that it doesn't exist or (c) that it neither exists nor doesn't exist or (d) that it both exists and doesn't exist. All four extremes are cut off, and no designation of any kind is made by the mind. In the sutra

tradition this is called going beyond the four extremes, the four elaborations, or the thirty-two exaggerations. These all are basically the same thing. In actual meditative experience it is said that any kind of designation, embellishment or elaboration of any extreme is removed.

200. Mixing appearances and mind is "one-taste"
201. And has lesser, intermediate, and greater stages:
202. Mixing the dharmas of the two kinds into one equal taste.
203. Appearances and mind become like water poured into water.
204. And many types of primordial wisdom arising from one taste.

The third yoga or stage is called single flavor or the experience of single value of one taste.[27] The primary experience of this level is the experience of the inseparability of appearance and mind. That is to say that the outer appearances of phenomena and the inner mind which apprehends phenomena are both felt to be of the same value. There is no difference. This third level also is divided into the lesser, medium, and greater stages.

The lesser stage is "mixing the dharmas of the two kinds into one equal taste." This stage is when experiences of duality are combined into a single flavor. Normally, we experience external phenomena as one thing and the mind as a separate thing. We have an external fixation on phenomena and an internal fixation on our subjective person. We also think in terms of self and other, so anything to do with the mind is self and anything appearing externally is believed to be other. This leads to a lot of incorrect perceptions. The force and the power of the previous two levels of one-pointedness and no-elaboration bring about the experience of this duality becoming completely mixed into a single flavor. It is the fruition of the previous two yogas.

In the middle level "appearances and mind become like water poured into water." In this level our experience of one taste is enhanced and is likened to the experience of water being poured into water. The external appearances of things are recognized as no different from the mind, and the mind is recognized to have the ability of arising in any way. There is absolutely no differentiation between external phenomena and internal phenomena of the mind. So it is like water being poured into water.

In the greater level we have many types of primordial wisdom arising from one taste. This occurs when external phenomena and mental phenomena, appearances and emptiness blend into one another and one reaches the stage of there being one flavor of everything. However, this isn't a state of stupidity where nothing is taking place in a big blend of everything. Rather, our mind with its eight consciousnesses transforms or manifests into the five wisdoms. From abiding in the state of everything blended, the five wisdoms—the all-accomplishing wisdom, the discriminating wisdom, the wisdom of equanimity, the mirror-like wisdom, and dharmadhatu wisdom—are not mixed together. Instead, they are very specific, very vivid, so that there is more enhancement of wisdom and insight, rather than a state of stupidity.

205. The complete purification of rigid mind is "non-meditation"
206. And has lesser, intermediate and greater stages:
207. Being free from all ideas of meditation and meditator.

After this experience of the single flavor, one reaches the fourth yoga or level called the stage of non-meditation. Through the power of becoming habituated to meditation we reach a stage in which we no longer distinguish between meditating and not meditating. This

is when we are liberated in dharmadhatu, when "rigid mind" or discursive thoughts have naturally subsided.

The stage of non-meditation is also divided into three. At the lowest level of non-meditation one experiences no difference between the meditation itself and the meditator; there is no person meditating and no meditation. We realize that in the essence of the dharmadhatu there naturally are no such distinctions.

208. Gradually purifying the imprint of the veils of knowledge

The medium stage of non-meditation is said to be when the imprint of conceptual obscurations are completely purified. Generally, we talk about the two kinds of veils or obscurations: the emotional obscurations and the intellectual obscurations, which is seeing things dualistically in terms of perceived appearances and perceiving mind.[28] Not only are the obscurations cleared away at this stage but even the imprints of seeing things this way are gradually purified.

209. And the mixing of the mother and child clear light.
210. The primordial wisdom of the dharmadhatu pervades space.

The final level of the stage of non-meditation is called the "mixing of the mother and child clear light," or the meeting of the mother and child luminosity. This luminosity has many names. Sometimes it is called the primordial wisdom which sees things as they are; Mahamudra, dharmadhatu, or tathagatagarbha, All of these refer to the same basic luminosity which has two aspects called "mother luminosity" and "child luminosity." The mother luminosity is the actual true nature of mind. It is the unchangeable part of mind, the dharmata, which is always present as a foundation of Buddhahood

until it has been reached. The child luminosity is the path of meditation we progress along slowly and gradually with the experience of clear light gradually increasing bit by bit until we finally realize this stage of non-meditation. We then realize that this growing realization is the same as the original nature of all things and that it was always there. So this is like mixing the original mother luminosity and the developed child luminosity and recognizing them as the same thing all along.

The realization of this final level of non-meditation is all-pervasive. The wisdom of dharmadhatu expands throughout space pervading all phenomena. It is then present all the time whether we are meditating or not, without ever ceasing to be. In all there are twelve specific levels specified on the path of Mahamudra (three levels of each of the four stages). Even if these levels might be too advanced for us right now, this knowledge will help us to progress and improve our meditation in the correct direction in the future.

211. In short, as far as meditation is concerned:
212. If the mind can dwell according to our wishes, this is one-pointedness.
213. One then sees the face of ordinary mind.

We have a brief summary of the four yogas. The text says, "If the mind can dwell according to our wishes, this is one-pointedness." In terms of resting in equipoise, when the mind can dwell as long as it wants and there is some control this is one-pointedness—the first yoga. The quality of one-pointedness is that one really sees the nature of ordinary mind, meaning one experiences ordinary mind directly, not intellectually.

214. Realizing that there is no foundation is "no elaboration."

Then in the second yoga of "no elaboration," we basically realize there is no root, and we are completely free of a foundation. When looking at the essence of the movement of mind or looking at the essence of the still mind we see them to be of the same nature. Neither of them has a foundation nor a root and so they are essentially the same. Then there is no longer an essential distinction between the mind either abiding or moving.

215. Liberating all dualistic perception
216. In awareness is "one-taste."

Then whatever clinging or fixation there is to duality of external appearance and internal mind, self and other, is liberated through the experience of meditation. In the very recognition of awareness this duality is liberated. And this, in short, is the state of one-taste, the third yoga.

217. Transcending all conventional terms of meditating or not meditating,
218. The imprints are ended. This is "non-meditation."

Finally, in the next stage we no longer are able to designate a certain state as meditation and another state as non-meditation. The distinction between these two is completely transcended and has become completely irrelevant. Any habitual pattern or imprints of the obscurations of emotions or the obscurations to knowledge are transcended. This is the fourth yoga of non-meditation.

This then is the description of the twelve stages within the four yogas. This is also described in detail in Tashi Namgyal's *Moonbeams of Mahamudra* in which the method of categorizing experiences into these twelve stages is compared with the normal Buddhist approach of the five paths and ten bodhisattva stages.[29] Tashi Namgyal in a

scholarly approach explains which of the twelve stages is related to which bodhisattva stage in great detail. Whereas this song of Mahamudra by Jamgon Kongtrul is a spiritual song of inspiration which comes from direct personal experience, the whole purpose for Tashi Namgyal (1512-1587 C.E.) in writing *Moonbeams of Mahamudra* was to refute the Sakya Pandita who said the whole idea of Mahamudra was not really a valid or authentic path. The Sakya Pandita said that to do this kind of stupid Mahamudra meditation would result only in being born as an animal or ending up in the form or formless realms, so it wasn't really a true method. So Tashi Namgyal thought he definitely had to refute this. Actually, he asked Drukpa Padma Karpo, another great lama, to write a book in refutation of all the accusations of Sakya Pandita. But Padma Karpo wouldn't do it. So Tashi Namgyal had to do it himself. Tashi Namgyal says in *Moonbeams of Mahamudra* that most people who have had experience of Mahamudra don't know how to write about it because they are not learned enough to say anything about it. And those who are learned enough to say anything about it have had no meditation experience of it. And still others who have both the experience and the scholarship do not have the altruistic mind to do it. He was referring to Padma Karpo, because he wouldn't compose this as if he didn't have an altruistic motivation. Then Takpo Tashi Namgyal says, "I am not learned in this experience, but at least I have the thought of benefiting others by writing this book." In this book he refutes the accusations of Sakya Pandita by saying that maybe it is true that if you meditate like an idiot or you meditate on stupid Mahamudra, you would be born as an animal. But this is not the fault of the dharma, that is the fault of being an idiot.

219. Those on the level of the great yogins,
220. Starting with Naropa and Maitripa,

221. Down to my venerable lama Pema Wangpo,
222. Those belonging to the golden garland of the Kagyu
223. Have gone to the dharmakaya kingdom of non-meditation,
224. They have purified the darkness of the two veils in the dhatu
225. Extended the great skill of the two kinds of knowledge
226. And opened the treasury that pervades space for the benefit of others.

The meditator who goes through all twelve levels and increases the experience as described in this text is called a great yogi. This kind of yogi has existed from the beginning of the Kagyu lineage with Naropa and Maitripa right down to Jamgon Kongtrul's own lama Pema Nyingche Wangpo. All of these have been masters who have reached this final stage of non-meditation in which all faults have been completely eradicated and who have the good qualities described. They have reached the kingdom of the dharmakaya. The main things which they abandoned were the two veils or obscurations: the obscurations of emotions and the obscurations of knowledge. With these two veils being completely purified, the knowledge of all ultimate phenomena and the knowledge of all conventional phenomena develops. These two wisdoms increase and then help all sentient beings. It is like opening the treasure of the sky which completely pervades throughout space.

227. They remain as a refuge beyond doubt.
228. The oral lineage has been passed from one to another
229. This means that it is not just words, but the meaning that counts.

Because these faults have been abandoned, the qualities which have been obtained, and the activity for the benefit of beings has been made, these lineage lamas have become a source of refuge. One doesn't have to wonder whether they have the ability to provide refuge

because in the Kagyu lineage, Mahamudra teachings have been passed on from one lama to another. Each lama received the complete instructions. The student then relied on these instructions and attained realization and then, in turn, became worthy of passing on those instructions. In this way, not just the words of the realization have been passed on, but every one in the lineage was also a holder of this meaning, so the true meaning of the instructions were passed along also.

230. Even though I am an undisciplined, vile ordinary person
231. As I am holding the sign of your noble lineage,
232. Please lead me quickly to the kingdom of non-meditation.
233. Kind ones, please completely purify my rigid mind in the dhatu.

Jamgon Kongtrul adds a supplication to the ending of this discussion on path Mahamudra. In his supplication he says he is an "undisciplined, vile ordinary person," meaning a person under the influence of disturbing emotions, undisciplined, and lazy. He says, even though I am like that, at least I have entered into the Kagyu lineage. He says, all I have is this sign that I am Kagyu and asks to please bring him quickly to the kingdom of non-meditation, where "rigid mind," all discursive thought and concepts are completely purified in the dharmadhatu.

Questions

Question: It seems to me that in our particular sangha the idea of one-taste is interpreted as meaning that we don't have any more preferences, that anything goes, that if it is too hot, that is one-taste, that is okay then. If the steaks comes well done when you asked for it

medium rare, that is fine, you feel just fine about that. I like to know really if one-taste means that.

Rinpoche: Yes, this is one flavor, but it also includes the aspect of knowing or awareness. It is not like you are not aware that the steak is overdone, you have an awareness of it. But the state of not having attachment to anything nice and, not having aversion to anything unpleasant, is an experience of one flavor.

7
Fruition Mahamudra

III. Fruition Mahamudra

234. Fruition Mahamudra is concerned with:

Fruition Mahamudra is the actualization of the Mahamudra experience. As an ordinary person we are not aware of our own true nature and that is the ground Mahamudra. Then through the teachings of the Buddha and the teachings of our root lama we are introduced to that nature and we learn that our true nature exists and we have Buddha-nature within ourselves. But it is not enough to simply know that it exists, we need to have realization brought about by meditation, which is the path Mahamudra. When the path is actualized, then we have fruition Mahamudra.

235. The ground is introduced as one's own face, the innate three kayas;
236. The path consists in concentrating on the view and meditation;
237. And the fruition is the manifestation of the immaculate three kayas.

We begin with a brief explanation in these verses. Foundation Mahamudra is completely unfabricated, innate, just as it is. If one recognizes it, it doesn't become better. If one doesn't recognize it, it doesn't become worse. The ground has the nature of the three kayas;

the unborn basis of the dharmakaya, the unceasing radiance of the sambhogakaya, and the energy of manifesting of the nirmanakaya. These three are present as the natural state Mahamudra. Through meeting exceptional teachers and relying on their special methods and exceptional instructions, ordinary mind can be realized. This is only possible because there is this foundation.

It is not enough to have an introduction to this true nature because through endless lifetimes up to now we have become habituated to certain conditioned patterns including many negative patterns. So when we sit to meditate after being introduced to this ground Mahamudra, sometimes flashes of realization of this true nature occur, but then again these are swept away by the power of confusion. When this happens, the recognition of the basic foundation becomes impure or imperfect. So as well as the view, one needs to bring home the crucial point of meditation, really concentrate in meditation.

Developing the perfect view with meditation will result in the confusion or illusory beliefs diminishing and disappearing. Then primordial wisdom will be able to flourish more and more. This meditation on view will result in the actualization of the three kayas without any stain or blemish. The primary stains are the two obscurations: the obscurations of the emotions (the kleshas) and the obscurations to knowledge.

238. The dharmakaya is the basis, emptiness without any elaboration.

The actualization of the three kayas at the time of the fruition Mahamudra has three qualities. The first is described by the Tibetan word *shi*, which means the "nature," the basis," or "character." The word *shi* here means the true nature. In the more colloquial Tibetan the word *shi* is used to mean a person's character, such as if the person

has a good character or a bad character. The basic underlying character of all phenomena and of the mind itself is emptiness. This essence is, furthermore, completely free from any kind of conceptualization or elaboration of whether it actually exists or doesn't exist. The emptiness of the character or nature itself is the dharmakaya.

The Sanskrit word dharmakaya is made of the word "dharma" and "kaya." The word "dharma" was translated into Tibetan as *chö*. The Sanskrit word "dharma" is "holding," in the sense of holding one from falling into suffering of the three lower realms. When this word was translated by the great translators into Tibetan, they chose the word "*chö*" which means to improve or remedy a situation. For instance, one would use *chö* if a person were sick and needed to be made well, one would remedy their sickness. Although there is a slight difference in these words (*chö* spelled *chos* being "dharma" and *cho* spelled *bcos* meaning "curing"), the meaning is the same because both of them imply a certain capability. For instance, to prevent something from falling so that it doesn't fall (dharma) is similar to the ability to save it (*chö*). Similarly, to improve one's faults or improve one's sickness also implies this ability or capability. So in both cases the actual meaning is the same. The second part of dharmakaya is "kaya," which literally means "body," but in this context has nothing to do with body or form. It is a word to indicate the basis or foundation or the root of the dharma. The foundation of that ability is that capability implied in the word dharma.

239. The sambhogakaya is its brilliance, the naturally luminous.

When we say the basic character or nature is empty, it is not the same as when we say a house is empty or the sky is empty. This kind of emptiness means completely devoid of anything, nothing there to change and nothing there to take place. However, when we use

"empty" in terms of the nature of mind, it means this essence is essentially empty of anything substantial, yet it has a certain capacity, a certain brilliance or radiance. Radiance is this aspect of appearing, rather than the aspect of being empty. Even though the essence is empty, it has this unceasing radiance or energy, the nature of clarity or luminosity. This brilliance (Tib. *dang*), this clarity or luminosity (Tib. *salwa*), is the nature of the sambhogakaya.

Sambhogakaya in Tibetan is *long chö dzok pay ku* with *longchö* meaning, having possessions or pleasures, having everything that you could possibly need. It allows for all pleasures and all possessions to arise for oneself and others. The second part *dzok pay* means "complete" or "perfected." So all possessions, enjoyments, all happiness is perfected in the sambhogakaya.

240. The nirmanakaya is the unceasing play of various manifestations

This luminosity has a certain power or energy to it. It is like a wild animal. It is very powerful and there is nothing that it can't do with its power, its force. This force can manifest as all the varied phenomena of the world and there is no way of blocking or impeding it. This energy manifests without anything being able to impede it. This quality, this energy, or force is termed the "nirmanakaya."

Nirmanakaya or *tulku* in Tibetan literally means "emanated" or "emanation body." The dharmakaya has all the qualities of enlightenment already present as a foundation, all qualities are completely perfect already, but no one can perceive them because there is no form. The further perfection of all happiness or bliss, the sambhogakaya, manifests out of the dharmakaya, but ordinary people don't perceive it either. So there is a further manifestation, an actual emanated body that anybody can perceive. In the word nirmanakaya the term "kaya" is to be understood as "body or form." So coming

from the dharmakaya, the nirmanakaya is perceived at the impure level, manifesting as the foundation for bewilderment. The energy or force of the nirmanakaya manifests on an impure level, actually as confused (i.e. not true) appearances. All the appearances that ordinary beings perceive are perceived in a confused or ignorant way. The pure aspect of the nirmanakaya is the Buddha activity that is constantly taking place for all sentient beings.

241. Encompassing all things,
242. The nature of Mahamudra is coincidence.[30]

So this nature of Mahamudra pervades all objects. It is completely all-pervasive, all-encompassing, and all-embracing.

243. The realm of dharmas free from accepting or rejecting.
244. Possessing the beauty of unconditioned bliss,

The dharmadhatu is completely free of anything to give up or anything to reject, so there is nothing added or gained in the dharmadhatu, this nature of Mahamudra. Also its nature is bliss. This is not the kind of happiness that we sometimes feel and sometimes don't; this bliss can't change or disappear. It is said to be pure or completely stainless happiness. It is like a young beautiful body which is in its beauty is completely at peace, not just a happiness that comes and goes.

245. It is the great and vast wealth of wisdom.
246. It is the natural form of kindness transcending thought.

Not only is it great bliss, but there is an aspect of understanding. It is the complete manifestation of the two wisdoms; the knowledge of

absolute phenomena and the knowledge of relative phenomena. Having these two knowledges causes a great expanse of wisdom and also it is the very manifestation of compassion. In the mind of great compassion, the Buddha activity is unimaginable and unfathomable, and manifests wherever needed.

247. Because of wisdom, one does not stay in samsara
248. Because of compassion, one does not stay in nirvana
249. Activities are spontaneously accomplished without effort.

From this realization of dharmata, two great qualities arise: prajna and compassion. Since one has understood the nature of phenomena, there is no dwelling in the state of samsara and one will be naturally liberated from it. Arising out of this wisdom is also great compassion. Being in the state of bliss and peace for oneself is not sufficient. There is this automatic, spontaneous compassion arising for all beings. Because of the compassion there is no abiding in nirvana, no staying in the state of peace or nirvana. Therefore, not only one's own purpose is achieved, but the purpose of all beings. Buddha activity which is completely without effort, not deliberate, will spontaneously arise.

250. The luminosities of ground and path, combine like mother and child.
251. Ground and fruition will be joined together

As this occurs the foundation clear light or luminosity and the path luminosity "combine like mother and child." This was described previously, exactly the same way. Primordial wisdom was always there from the beginning. That foundation luminosity and the luminosity which is realized on the path of practice become inseparable. The

mother and child clear light combine. Based on this experience of the uniting of the mother and child luminosities, the foundation Mahamudra and the fruition Mahamudra are simultaneously present, or realized to be the same thing, not two.

252. Buddhahood is found in one's own mind.
253. The treasure that fulfills all wishes is revealed
254. E ma! What a great wonder!

Then it is said that the Buddha is found in one's own mind. Buddhahood, the realization of Buddha doesn't come from anywhere outside, it is not something newly found or invented but it is found from within one's own mind. And at that time, all needs and desires, anything whatsoever is revealed or brought forth, just like opening a treasure. Everything that was ever needed is now brought out like opening a great treasure. And where is that treasure? It is inside, it is within one's mind and it is found. And this phenomena is said to be so amazing. It is so fantastic, awesome. It says that through these exceptional teachings and so forth it can be realized this way. That is the ending of the discussion of the foundation, path, and fruition Mahamudra.

Now at the very end Jamgon Kongtrul repeats in a very brief way, going through the whole thing, this time dividing it into four, first the view, then the meditation, then the action and then fruition.

255. Regarding the view of Mahamudra
256. Analysis cannot define it.
257. Therefore, throw knowledge of mental constructions away!

The Mahamudra view, cannot be reached through inference or conclusion or investigation or any kind of intellectual process.

Normally, view is something that we investigate. We come up with a theory through logical thinking, a logical process. But in the case of Mahamudra this doesn't work. There is no way to say this is it, this is the view that you are supposed to have, and this is Mahamudra. Any kind of investigation or theoretical kind of logical thinking does not apply, it does not work at all. So it advises you to completely throw out any kind of theories, any kind of logic, to throw them far away. The view of Mahamudra has to be pointed out in our mind, it must be realized immediately in dependence upon the blessings and the powers of the lineage. Milarepa advised Gampopa in this way, that in the practice of Mahamudra, there is nothing theoretical that is going to help, that is going to arrive there, that the only thing is the direct experience of it. And that actually, if you apply theories and concepts to it there is a chance of it going astray and being completely the wrong kind of experience.

258. Regarding the meditation of Mahamudra
259. Concentration on a thought cannot get through
260. Therefore abandon artificial resting in meditative equipoise.

In the meditation of Mahamudra there is no particular experience that you have to try and cultivate, thinking, clinging, or fixating to some desire to have a certain kind of meditation, thinking, "This is what proper meditation of Mahamudra is." And "This is not a good meditation or experience coming from Mahamudra meditation." Not thinking in this way and not fixating on the experiences of bliss and non-thought and clarity as being something, thinking, "This clarity, I need to have this experience. I need to have this experience of non-thought. I need to have this experience of emptiness" and so forth. That is why the term "ordinary mind" is used, because there is no kind of fabrication or contrivance at all, or clinging to what kind of

experience this meditation should be. So it says to totally throw that whole idea out and just rest in whatever arises in the mind.

261. Regarding the action of Mahamudra
262. Rules do not apply.
263. Therefore free yourself from notions of acting and not acting.

In the behavior or action of Mahamudra, there is no deliberateness and thinking, "I should do this particular thing. I should behave in this way. I shouldn't behave in this way," or thinking, "Now I have been doing Mahamudra practice I have to act and behave in a certain way." There is no deliberateness, no kind of frame of reference at all to one's activities, they are completely free from any thoughts of actions or non-actions, activity or non-activity.

264. Regarding the fruition of Mahamudra
265. Nothing new can be attained.
266. Therefore cast away hoping, fearing, and desiring.

For the fruition Mahamudra, there is no attaining of anything new, except that you arrive at where you already were, you arrive at the state which you already had or already existed. Nothing whatsoever is new, nothing is different than it was, except arriving back at where you started. So there are no ideas and one should completely give up any hopes that there is going to be some fantastic fruition of Mahamudra and it is going to be so wonderful and incredible and some kind of big reward. And there should be no fear of not obtaining this reward. Those desires of hopes and fears need to be thrown far away.

267. This is the profound intention of all Kagyupas.

268. It is the only path used by all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

So these are the qualities all the Kagyu lamas have attained. It is the Mahamudra that they have practiced and the result of Mahamudra they have attained. The instructions they have given to their disciples were the Mahamudra instructions. So Mahamudra can be said to be the very essence of their thoughts or intentions. Also it is the way, it is the path which all Buddhas and all the Buddhas' children, all bodhisattvas, all siddhas and so forth have traveled. They have achieved enlightenment in this very way, in this one way. So it is the single path traveled by all the Victors and their sons.

269. It is the method to turn away the confused circle of existence
270. It is dharma for obtaining Buddhahood in one lifetime,
271. The heart essence of the sutra and tantra teachings.

It is also the method or means to turn back, or to reverse all the confusion of samsara, of existence. The whole of samsaric existence is transcended through this method of Mahamudra. And it is also the method of obtaining Buddhahood in a single lifetime. It is like the very heart essence of all the teachings, all the dharma that comes from the Buddha, both the sutras and all the tantras.

271. May I and all sentient beings reaching as far as space
272. Simultaneously attain realization and be liberated.
273. May we reach the supreme Mahamudra state.

Then finally the song ends in a supplication or prayer, that I myself and all beings throughout space may be liberated through realizing Mahamudra, altogether, all at the same time, and thereby obtain the excellent state of Mahamudra.

This text was composed by Yonten Gyatso Lodro Thaye, the subject of Padma, so as not to act against the seal of the all-encompassing speech of Him, who is Prajnaparamita herself, emptiness endowed with all excellent qualities, who appeared as a Vajra Holder. The place was Kunzang Dechen Osal Ling on the left slope of the third Devikoti, the Precious Tsan-like Rock. SHUBHAM

This essence of the Prajnaparamita was taught by "the Vajra Holder which is to be understood as Jamgon Kongtrul's root lama Pema Nyingche Wangpo. Since it is so completely profound and vast in its scope, in order for it not to be lost, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, or Yönten Gyatso, has written it down in this song.

The place where he wrote this down is the "tsa dra rinchen dra" in the place called Devikoti. And he says the third Devikoti here because another name for it is Tsari. In the instructions in the tantra of Chakrasamvara are mentioned the twenty-four special places or power places. And of the twenty-four power places there are eight connected with body, eight connected with speech and eight connected with mind. One of the ones that are connected with mind, one of these sacred places is this place in India called Tsari, which is the first. There is also another place in the southern part of Tibet called Tsari, and then there is Jamgon Kongtrul's home here, which he also calls Tsari or Devikoti. That is why it is called the third Devikoti here. In the name *tsa dra rinchen dra*, which is the second part of the name here, the *dra* means "like," so *tsa dra* means "like tsa." So he is talking about that it is like Tsari which is the original name of this place.

Then it is mentioned, as part of this name also, that it is a precious rock which is like Tsari, which is literally the name. The rock where Jamgon Kongtrul stayed was in the shape of Vajrakilaya. When the famous terton Chokgyur Lingpa went there to that place he

recognized it. There was a prophecy of Guru Rinpoche of there being three termas that would exist. The first of Vajrasattva, then of Yangdag and then of Dorje Phurba, associated with the three places, the three points of forehead, throat and heart. Then when Chokgyur Lingpa was there at Jamgon Kongtrul's place, seeing this rock structure, he actually found these three treasures, these three termas, in the places corresponding to the forehead, throat and heart of this rock structure.

Then in this special place which has these qualities he had a retreat house to the left of it. This was called Dechen Osal Ling and is where he wrote this song. SHUBHAM at the end there means *tashi*, may everything be good, auspicious.

Questions

Question: Would you please explain again how bewilderment arises from the sambhogakaya?

Rinpoche: It is not that you think that it is arising from sambhogakaya. But this basic nature has this radiance, almost character kind of thing, which becomes clearer and clearer because it is unimpeded, it is unimpedable, unobstructable. So it manifests as further and further clarity or luminosity, which eventually is the appearance of everything, all objects and all objective reality, getting more and more clear. That whole process which describes it more or less from the original state through the whole process or development of more and more vividness or clarity taking place is the impure aspect description. If you describe that same thing taking place through the pure aspect or, with realization, then that first unobstructedness of that radiance, where its nature is clarity or luminosity, that part is called sambhogakaya. Then when it is further manifested to actual appearances, that part is called nirmanakaya. On the one side you

could call them bewilderment and on the other side sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya.

Question: So it seems that the difference whether it goes in increasing clarity and appearance is whether the emptiness aspect is present at the same time or not.
Rinpoche: Yes exactly. If one keeps in mind the realization of emptiness, then the first unimpeded aspect of the radiance is sambhogakaya and the further manifestation is the power and ability or strength of its manifestation is nirmanakaya. When there is no realization of emptiness then it seems like the progressive development of the clarity into final appearance, bewildered appearance.

Question: Could you say something more about what it means that all qualities are present in the dharmakaya?
Rinpoche: This means that it has all qualities or is the foundation or basis of all qualities. It has the ability; there exists the capability of eliminating all that which is to be eliminated, all the bewilderment, all the ignorance, all the bewildered appearances of our normal experience. This whole thing which was described with the clarity being more and more vivid and final, the appearances and the whole duality appearing, is something which is to be cleared up or eliminated. That bewilderment is to be eliminated. It is something to be eliminated. When it is eliminated then we say it is through the actualization of the emptiness of the dharmakaya and, through the wisdom and quality of the understanding of the clarity aspect of this potential, the fact of it having all this potential as clarity. Because it has those two aspects or, one realizes those two aspects, it is said to be the foundation of qualities.

Question: So the qualities are not the dharmakaya itself?

Rinpoche: The dharmakaya itself is not the qualities, it is the foundation or basis from which the qualities arise.

Question: The book the Clear Light of Bliss lists a Mahamudra lineage which didn't have any names I recognized. It was a text on the completion stage of Mahamudra. I wondered whether this was the same discipline as the Kagyus?
Rinpoche: Essentially the book discusses Mahamudra using the same terms as we have, but it is from a different lineage (Gelugpa). It comes through a different lineage and I think that our lineage, the Kagyu lineage, is a little more profound. Why? Because our lineage holders actually practiced and gained direct realization of Mahamudra, their understanding arose from actual experience. The other lineage has kept the meaning of the words very well and passed on an intellectual level, but it has not always been based on experience of the meditation.

The Six Realms of Samsara

Name	As pictured in thangkas	Obstacle
	HIGHER REALMS	
God (Skt. *deva*)	The celestial paradises are shown	Pride
Demi-god (Skt. *asura*)	Demi-gods are involved in conflict with the gods.	Jealousy
	REALM EASIEST TO ATTAIN ENLIGHTENMENT	
Human realm	Human beings in their houses practicing the dharma	The five disturbing emotions
	LOWER REALMS	
Animal realm	Animals on earth	Ignorance
Hungry ghost (Skt. *preta*)	Beings with large bellies and very small mouths and necks	Desire
Hell beings	Beings being tortured in hot and cold realms	Anger

The Five Paths

1. Path of Accumulation	**Practice** four mindfulnesses, recognize the four marks of existence (impermanence, absence of a self, suffering and peace). **Practice** four renunciations **Practice** four concentrative absorptions (strong interest, perserverance, attentiveness, and investigation)
2. Path of Application	**Practice** five controlling powers (confidence, sustained effort, mindfulness, samadhi, and prajna). These powers become "unshakable" at the end of this path.
3. Path of Insight/seeing	**Attain** the first bodhisattva level of perceiving emptiness. **Develop** true awareness of the Four Noble Truths and their 16 aspects. **Develop** seven factors of enlightenment (memory, investigation of meaning and values, effort, joy, refinement and serenity, samadhi, and equanimity).
4. Path of Cultivation (Meditation)	**One** goes through the 2nd to 10th bodhisattva levels. **One** practices the eight-fold Noble Path (right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation).
5. Path of No More Learning	This is Buddhahood.

The Bodhisattva Levels

1. The Joyous One	Emphasis on generosity
2. The Stainless One	Emphasis on discipline
3. The Illuminating One	Emphasis on patience
4. The Flaming One	Emphasis on exertion
5. The One Difficult to Conquer	Emphasis on meditation
6. The Manifest One	Emphasis on wisdom
7. The Far Going one	Emphasis on skillful activity
8. The Unshakable One	Emphasis on future projection
9. The One of Good Discrimination	Emphasis on efficacy
10. Cloud of Dharma	Attaining enlightened wisdom

Transformation of Conciousness into Wisdom

Organ	Consciousness	Wisdom	Kayas
Eye	1.Eye consciousness	All-accomplishing wisdom	Nirmanakaya
Ear	2. Ear consciousness		
Nose	3. Nose consciousness		
Tongue	4. Tongue consciousness		
Body	5. Body consciousnes		
Mind	6A. Non-conceptual mind consciousness		
	6B. Conceptual mind consciousness	Dharmadhatu wisdom	Svabhavikakaya
	7A. Immediate mind consciousness	Discriminating wisdom	Sambhogakaya
	7B. Afflicted mind consciousness	Wisdom of equality	
	8. Alaya consciousness	Mirror-like wisdom	Dharmakaya

Notes

1. This refers to the Five Treasuries composed by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye. These are: 1. *The Treasury of Vast Teachings* (Gyachen Kardzo) which is the actual collected writings of Jamgon Kongtrul, works he himself composed. 2. *The Treasury of Knowledge* (Sheja Dzo) is like a collection of his writings on all fields of knowledge, 3. *The Treasury of Hidden Treasure Teachings* (Rinchen Terzod), 4. *The Treasury of Kagyu Mantra Teachings* (Kagyu Ngakzod), and 5. *The Treasury of Spiritual Instructions* (Dam Ngakzod) are more like collections that he compiled.
2. The conditions for becoming a biological being are the ovum from your mother and the sperm from your father, which when mixed with consciousness forms that life and leads to the development of the fetus. The seed essence of the ovum is the red element and while you are alive it is in the centre of your body below your navel. The seed essence of your father's sperm is the white element, and it is present in the centre of your body at the top of your head. – *Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche*
3. This does not mean we should distort or deny our perception, but we should emphasize the good qualities and let faults be without being disturbed by them. This way we benefit most from whatever good a teacher has to offer. – *Cornelia Weishaar*
4. Gampopa was the founder of the monastic order of the Kagyu School and the lineages that branch out from him are known as the Dakpo Kagyu.
5. In Tibetan medicine and yoga there are subtle channels, like meridians in acupuncture, through which subtle energies (Skt. *prana*) flow.
6. These six consist of the subtle heat practice, the illusory body practice, the dream yoga practice, the luminosity practice, the ejection of consciousness practice and the bardo practice.
7. From Gampopa's disciple Phagmo Drupa, the Phagmo Kagyu; from Baram Dharma Wangchuk, the Baram Kagyu; from Dusum Khyenpa, (the

first Gyalwang Karmapa), the Kamtsang Kagyu, and; Ghampo Tsultrim Nyingpo's disciple Tsondru Trakpa, the Tshalpa Kagyu. These four are known as the four greater or senior schools.

Phagmo Drupa had eight main disciples who founded eight additional lineages: 1. The Drikhung Kagyu was founded by Drikhung Kyopa Jigten Sumgyi Gönpo. 2. The Drukpa Kagyu was founded by Drupchen Lingrepa Pema Dorje and his disciple Chöje Tsangpa Gyare Yeshe Dorje. 3. The Taklung Kagyu was founded by Taklung Thangpa Tashi Pal. 4. The Yasang Kagyu was founded by Zarawa Kalden Yeshe Senge and his disciple Yasang Chöje Chökyi Mönlam. 5. The Trophu Kagyu was founded by Rinpoche Gyatsa, and his disciple Trophu Lotsawa Champa Pal. 6. The Shuksep Kagyu was founded by Gyergom Tsultrim Senge. 7. Yelpa Kagyu was founded by Yelpa Drupthop Yeshe Tsekpa. 8. Martsang Kagyu was founded by Martsang Sherab Senge

8. In fact, garudas are said to be fully developed when they are born.

9. It may be helpful here to understand that the term "consciousness," which in Sanskrit is *vijana*, (Tib. *namshe*) refers to a specific type of cognition. It is the term for "cognition," *jana*, (Tib. *yeshe*) with the prefix *vi*, which means complete or fully developed. It is a more specific term than cognition and although it may sound like a positive thing to say "fully-developed cognition," in this context it is actually somewhat pejorative because it refers to cognition that has become developed in the sense of becoming coarsened. This is the type of cognition—or consciousness—that we as ordinary individuals have and it is divided into the eight or six types of consciousnesses. All of these consciousnesses are considered manifestations of the mind's impurity. They are things that arise when a mind does not recognize its own nature. The basic idea of the development of consciousness is that when a mind does not recognize its own nature, its inherent lucidity that is just a mere cognition or bare awareness, it runs wild. In running wild it becomes coarse or develops into deluded cognition or consciousness, which is a characteristic of samsara. Nevertheless, in the midst of the confused nature of these consciousnesses, the nature of this deluded mind is unchanged.

10. Some Buddhist schools such as those of the Theravada schools hold that there are six consciousnesses with there being five sensory consciousnesses (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile) and mental consciousness which comprises the functions of the seventh and eighth consciousness. Other Buddhist schools such as the Mind-only school, for example, hold that there are the five sensory consciousnesses, a mental consciousness, and then a separate seventh afflicted consciousness, and a separate eighth alaya consciousness.

    The five sensory consciousnesses perceive sensory input directly without doing any evaluation. The sixth mental consciousness which is what we call our "mind" it does all kinds of integration and evaluation of the sensory consciousnesses. The seventh afflicted consciousness is the every-present belief in an "I." The first seven consciousnesses are held together by the eighth foundation or alaya consciousness which also functions to store the imprints of everything happening in the sixth consciousness.
11. In Thrangu Rinpoche's *Transcending Ego* he describes this eighth consciousness in much more detail and two aspects of it. First, the eighth consciousness holds all the other consciousnesses together so one has the feeling that one is a single unitary being which gradually changes in time. Second, it is also the "store-house" consciousness in which all the karmic seeds are stored so when one sees an airplane, for example, one remembers that this is an airplane. These karmic seeds or latencies (Tib. *bakchag*) also carry one's karma of positive and negative actions which continues on from one lifetime to the next.
12. What happens is that all of the *bakchag*, "habitual tendencies or habits or ways of perceiving" are stored in the alaya or storehouse consciousness, the *kun zhi namshe*; then when certain conditions come together, we get the projections of all of these appearances that are the result of our having stored our previous habits in this storehouse consciousness. We think that these projections from our own consciousness are real, when in fact they're not, they're just confused appearances. The storehouse consciousness is called by two different names to illustrate the two

functions that it performs. The first is called "the holding consciousness" because it holds all of the habitual tendencies, the imprints from our previous ways of perceiving. The second is called the conditioned consciousness because when certain conditions come together, then certain habits wake up and emit certain projections of appearances. In this way, you can think of the storehouse consciousness as being like a tape recorder. When it's on record, then it's storing all of the information, all of the sounds, etc.; then when you put it on play, it sends them out.

In terms of the way that confusion arises, it's explained that the egoistic mind (the seventh consciousness) is like wind and the storehouse consciousness is like the ocean. So the wind of the egoistic mind blows on this ocean of the storehouse consciousness and causes these waves to come up out of it and those waves are the dualistic appearances that we think to be real. – *Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso Rinpoche*

13. This is the translation of the Tibetan word *salwa* which is also translated variously as "brilliance," "luminous clarity," and "luminosity." We must not make the mistake of thinking of this as some kind of light such as we get from a light bulb even though the words suggest this. Rather it is simply that continuous awareness, that knowing, that the mind always has.
14. We understand that the alaya or *kun zhi* does not lead to bewilderment, rather the habitual patterns do. When we recognize the ultimate state of the *kun zhi*, the ground consciousness, which is free of habitual patterns, we have realized wisdom. When it is free of all habitual patterns, it is no longer the *kun zhi* consciousness but the *kun zhi* wisdom, the *jnana-alaya*.
15. The union or inseparability of luminosity and emptiness refers to the fact that mind is empty, yet at the same time it is knowing, aware and so it also has luminosity. The emptiness could not exist without the luminosity and the luminosity could not exist without the emptiness.
16. For these nine examples see Thrangu Rinpoche's *The Uttaratantra: A Treatise on Buddha-Essence*. Namo Buddha and ZCG Publications.
17. When we say the co-emergence of ignorance and the eighth

consciousness, we mean that this misunderstanding of not knowing that external phenomena are empty and not "solid and real" arises and reinforces the eighth consciousness.

18. In this analogy the many thoughts and emotions and false beliefs such as "there is a real self" are compared to the waves on an ocean with the waves appearing very real, but they just come and go and don't have any real lasting substance. The true nature of mind or its essence is not thoughts and emotions, but a deep calm abiding which lasts forever just like the ocean itself.
19. The word "afflictive" is an English translation for the Sanskrit *klesha* and *mon nong* in Tibetan which are the negative disturbing emotions of anger, attachment and ignorance. The point being that even though the seventh consciousness has a negative connotation, it is not negative as long as there is no attachment to self.
20. Bewildered in this context refers to an incorrect perception. In other words, the true nature of self is that it is "empty" that is, that it is not a solid single entity, yet when we think of ourselves, it is as a solid, real thing. This is what is meant here by confusion or bewilderment or in Tibetan *ma rigpa*.
21. There are two levels of reality or two truths as they are often called *kunzop* (relative truth) and *dondam* (ultimate truth). *Kunzop* refers to the world as perceived by ordinary (unenlightened) beings and this reality is an illusion or fake in that we believe that objects are solid and enduring. We call this conventional reality because this is what most people perceive and believe in. However, a person who is enlightened will see that the world is actually empty of inherent nature and therefore see the world as it really is. This is referred to then as absolute truth or ultimate truth.

    One Western example is that if we have a cup, it looks white and solid and made out of material we call china. This is the conventional level. Yet scientists would tell us that this "cup" is really a collection of different elements and the atoms of these elements are moving at incredible speeds and the "white" we and all other humans see is really

just a particular wavelength of light. This would be more like the ultimate level of reality.

22. Fully enlightened beings, Buddhas, and their manifestations are often understood by way of the three kayas: the dharmakaya is enlightenment itself, wisdom beyond any reference point which can only be perceived by other enlightened beings; the sambhogakaya, often called the enjoyment body, manifests in the pure lands, which can only be seen by advanced bodhisattvas; and the nirmanakaya, which can be seen by ordinary beings as in the case of the historical Buddha, who was a supreme nirmanakaya, meaning that he displayed all the physical signs and marks of perfection, but nirmanakaya can also be any type of being or relative appearance to assist ordinary beings.
23. The failure of the mind to recognize its own true nature is what is meant by the term *ma rigpa*, or ignorance, the first level of obscuration or defilement in the mind. As a result of this ignorance, there arises in the mind the imputation of an "I" and an "other" (the other being something that is conceived as something that is other than the mind). This dualistic clinging, something that we have had throughout beginningless time and that never stops (until enlightenment), is the second level of obscuration, the obscuration of habits (habitual tendency).

    Based upon this dualistic clinging arise the three root mental afflictions: mental darkness (variously rendered by translators as ignorance, bewilderment, confusion, etc.), desire and aggression. Based upon these three afflictions there arise some 84,000 various mental afflictions enumerated by the Buddha, all of which together comprise the third level of obscuration, called the obscuration of mental afflictions (variously rendered as *klesha*, emotional affliction, disturbing emotions, etc). Under the influence of these, we perform actions that are obscured in their nature, which result in the fourth level of obscuration, called the obscuration of actions or karma. This is the process that keeps us in samsara. – *Khabje Kalu Rinpoche*
24. It was said by Tilopa, "Child, it is not by appearances that you are fettered, but by craving. Therefore Naropa, relinquish or cut through

craving." The distinction needs to be made between appearances and our craving for or grasping at them. Appearances themselves are not a problem. Grasping or craving is problematic. – *Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche*

25. "Ordinary" mind does not denote common mind that everyone has which is full of thoughts, desires, etc., but rather the original mind which is free of all disturbing emotions and incorrect wisdom.

    There is no need to do anything to your present wakefulness at the moment of recognizing; it is already as it is. That is the true meaning of naked ordinary mind, a famous term in Tibetan. It means not tampered with. There is no "thing" which needs to be accepted or rejected; it is simply as it is. The term 'ordinary mind' is the most immediate and accurate term to describe the nature of mind. No matter what terminology is being utilized within the Middle-way, Mahamudra or Dzogchen, naked ordinary mind is the simplest term.

26. The desire realm comprises the six realms of gods, demi-gods, humans, animals, hungry spirits and hell-beings. The form realm comprises eighteen classes of god of subtle form. The formless realm comprises four classes of gods.

27. One taste and co-emergent wisdom are generally the same, but they are used in a different way. Co-emergent wisdom is used in discussing the very essence of the nature, the foundation of one's realization being the true nature. Whereas one flavor is talking about the gradual experience, the enhancing of our experience through the different levels and at one point we experience it as one flavor. – *Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche*

28. There are two categories of obscurations or defilements that cover one's Buddha-essence: the emotional afflictions or obscuration of the disturbing emotions (the three root afflictions are ignorance, desire and aggression), and the more subtle obscurations known variously as the defilement of latent tendencies, the obscuration of dualistic perception, intellectual obscurations, or the cognitive obscurations (seeing the world from the perspective of a "self" and what is "other"). The first category prevents sentient beings from freeing themselves from samsara, while the second prevents them from gaining accurate knowledge and realizing truth.

29. There is a correspondence between these four stages of Mahamudra (one-pointedness, simplicity, one-flavor and non-meditation) and the five paths of accumulation, application, seeing, meditation and no-more-learning. The first level of one-pointedness refers mainly to one-pointed tranquility (Shamatha) meditation. The lesser and middling levels of one-pointedness would be more or less associated with the path of accumulation. The greater level of one-pointedness would be more associated with the path of application because one is joined to the true meaning. The second Mahamudra stage of freedom from concept (simplicity) is associated with the path of seeing. The stage of beyond concept means that first of all we have developed the power of Shamatha, and then through that tranquility meditation we develop Vipashyana. Because of the insight of Vipashyana, we realize the true nature, which corresponds to the path of seeing.

    The third Mahamudra stage of one-flavor corresponds to the path of cultivation or meditation, and the fourth Mahamudra stage of non-meditation corresponds to the fifth path of no-more-learning. The one-flavor stage corresponds to the second to the seventh bodhisattva levels. The eighth bodhisattva level corresponds to the lesser aspect of non-meditation. The ninth and the tenth bodhisattva levels correspond to the middling aspect of beyond meditation level. Then the state of Buddhahood would be the highest of the twelve sub-sections, the highest point of the non-meditation level.

    When we reach the twelfth stage, the highest stage of non-meditation through Mahamudra practice, then the qualities of mind that we achieve are the same as those of Buddhahood, those achieved through the classic, long Mahayana path. But the speech and the physical qualities are not quite the same. This is because when we traverse the ordinary Mahayana path, then for many endless kalpas we are taking birth again and again and generating virtue. This is an extremely powerful thing, even though it is a much longer process. In that long process we accumulate such vast virtue that this will lead, at the end of the ordinary Mahayana path, to the tremendous physical and speech

qualities that we associate with the thirty-two and eighty marks of the Buddha. When we go through the very profound and rapid path of Mahayana, we won't necessarily get those. If we look at the life of Jetsun Milarepa or the life of Gampopa, they didn't manifest the thirty-two signs and the eighty marks like the Shakyamuni Buddha did. This is because, for instance with Milarepa, he was born into an ordinary body and quickly perfected the Mahamudra. So the mind quality of realization is exactly the same, but the body and speech qualities that manifest for others are not the same. – *Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche*

30. The Tibetan is *zung 'jug* which is often translated as unity. But as the Tibetan term clearly implies the coming together of two factors such as emptiness and luminosity, coincidence is more precise. – *Cornelia Weishaar*

Glossary of Terms

Afflicted consciousness. The seventh consciousness. As used here it has two aspects: the immediate consciousness which monitors the other consciousnesses, making them continuous, and the klesha consciousness which is the continuous presence of self. (See *consciousnesses, eight*)

Afflictive obscuration. There are two types of obscurations that cover one's Buddha nature. The obscuration of the afflictive or disturbing emotions and the obscuration of dualistic perception, or sometimes called the intellectual obscurations or cognitive obscurations.

Alaya consciousness. (Tib. *kunzhi namshe*) According to the Chittamatra school this is the eighth consciousness and is often called the ground consciousness or storehouse consciousness.

Atman. Sanskrit for a permanent "self" which exists.

Bhumi. Level or stage. There are ten bodhisattva levels which begin with the path of seeing in the sutra tradition. The tantric tradition has thirteen levels.

Blessings. (Tib. *chin lap)* Splendor wave, conveying the sense of atmosphere descending or coming toward the practitioner. One's root guru and lineage are said to be the source of blessings. When the student can open themselves with uncontrived devotion, the grace of the lineage manifests as blessings, which dissolve into them and awaken them to a sense of greater reality.

Bodhichitta. Literally, the mind of enlightenment. There are two kinds of bodhichitta: absolute bodhichitta, which is completely awakened mind that sees the emptiness of all phenomena, and relative bodhichitta which is the aspiration to practice the six paramitas and free all beings from the suffering of samsara. In regard to relative bodhichitta, there are also two kinds: aspiration bodhichitta and perseverance bodhichitta.

Bodhisattva. "Heroic mind." *Bodhi* means blossomed or enlightened, and *sattva* means heroic mind. Literally, one who exhibits the mind of

enlightenment. Also an individual who has committed him or herself to the Mahayana path of compassion and the practice of the six paramitas to achieve Buddhahood to free all beings from samsara. These are the heart or mind disciples of the Buddha.

Bodhisattva levels. (Skt. *bhumi*) The levels or stages a bodhisattva goes through to reach enlightenment. These consist of ten levels in the sutra tradition and thirteen in the tantra tradition. The ten are: 1. Overwhelming Joy, 2. Stainless, 3. Radiant, 4. Luminous, 5. Difficult to Practice, 6. Obviously Transcendent , 7. Far Gone, 8. Unshakeable, 9. Excellent Discriminating Wisdom, 10. Cloud of Dharma.

Buddha nature. (Tib. *de shegs nying po*) The essential nature of all sentient beings; the potential for enlightenment.

Chakrasamvara. A meditational deity which belongs to the Anuttarayoga tantra set of teachings. A main yidam or tantra of the New Schools.

Channels, winds and essences. Nadi, prana and bindu; the constituents of the vajra body. These channels are not anatomical structures, but more like meridians in acupuncture. There are thousands of channels, but the three main channels that carry the subtle energy are the right, left and central channel. The central channel runs roughly along the spinal column while the right and left are on the sides of the central channel.

According to the yogic teachings of the path of skillful means, realization is attained through synchronization of body and mind. This may be achieved through meditating on nadi (channels), prana (energy), and bindu (drops) – the psychic components in the illusory body. Prana is the energy, or "wind," moving through the nadis. As is said, "Mind consciousness rides the horse of prana on the pathways of the nadis. The bindu is mind's nourishment."

Because of dualistic thinking, prana enters the left and right channels. This divergence of energy in the illusory body corresponds to the mental activity that falsely distinguishes between subject and object and leads to karmically determined activity. Through yogic practice, the pranas can be brought into the central channel and therefore transformed into wisdom-prana. Then the mind can recognize its fundamental nature, realizing all dharmas as unborn.

This belongs to advanced practice and can only be learned through direct oral transmission from an accomplished guru. Once the meditator is well established in the experience of the fundamental nature of mind, they can meditate on it directly, dissolving the nadi, prana, and bindu visualization. Meditation using the concept of psychic channels is regarded as being the completion stage with signs, and the formless practice which contemplates the nature of mind directly is the completion stage without signs.

Chittamatra school. A school founded by Asanga in the fourth century, usually translated as the Mind-only school. It is one of the four major schools in the Mahayana tradition (the others being the two Rangtong – Svatantrika and Prasangika – and Shentong) and its main tenet (to greatly simplify) is that all phenomena are mental events.

Clarity. (Tib. *salwa*) Also translated as luminosity. The nature of mind is that it is empty of inherent existence, but the mind is not just voidness or completely empty because it has this clarity which is awareness or the knowing of mind. So clarity is a characteristic of emptiness (*shunyata*) of mind.

Co-emergent wisdom. (Skt. *sahajajnana*, Tib. *lhen chik kye pay yeshe*) The advanced realization of the inseparability of samsara and nirvana and how these arise simultaneously and together.

Cognitive obscurations. There are two types of obscuration that cover one's Buddha nature; the obscuration of the afflictive or disturbing emotions and the obscuration of dualistic perception, sometimes called the intellectual obscurations or cognitive obscurations. The cognitive obscuration is the subtle obscuration of holding on to the concepts of subject, object and action.

Completion stage. In the Vajrayana there are two stages of meditation: the creation/development stage and the completion stage. Completion stage with marks is the six doctrines. Completion stage without marks is the practice of essence Mahamudra, resting in the unfabricated nature of mind.

Conditioned (cyclic) existence. (Skt. *samsara*) Ordinary existence which

contains suffering because one still possesses attachment, aggression, and ignorance. It is contrasted to liberation or nirvana.

Consciousnesses, sensory. These are the five sensory consciousnesses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and body sensation.

Consciousnesses, eight. (Skt. *vijñana*) These are the five sensory consciousnesses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and body sensation. Sixth is mental consciousness, seventh is afflicted consciousness, and eighth is ground consciousness.

Consciousnesses, six. The five sensory consciousnesses and the mental consciousness.

Creation stage. (Skt. *utpattikrama*) In the Vajrayana there are two stages of meditation: the development and the completion stage. The creation stage is a method of tantric meditation that involves the visualization and contemplation of deities for the purpose of purifying habitual tendencies and realizing the purity of all phenomena. In this stage visualization of the deity is established and maintained.

Desire realm. Comprises the six realms of gods, demi-gods, humans, animals, hungry spirits and hell-beings.

Dharmadhatu. Dharma is "the truth" and dhatu means, "space free from a centre." The all-encompassing space, unoriginated and without beginning, out of which all phenomena arises. The Sanskrit means "the essence of phenomena" and the Tibetan means "the expanse of phenomena," but it usually refers to the emptiness that is the essence of phenomena. Dharmadhatu and dharmakaya are essentially the same; they are two indivisible aspects of the same thing. The dharmakaya emphasizes the wisdom aspect while dharmadhatu emphasizes the emptiness aspect.

Dharmakaya. (Tib. *chö ku*) One of the three bodies of Buddhahood. It is enlightenment itself, that is, wisdom beyond any point of reference. (see *kayas, three.)*

Dharmata. Dharmata is often translated as "suchness," "the true nature of things" or "things as they are." It is phenomena as it really is or as seen by a completely enlightened being without any distortion or obscuration, so one can say it is "reality." The nature of phenomena and mind.

Dhatu. These are the six sensory objects of sight, sound, smell, taste and body sensation; the six sense faculties: the visual sensory faculty, the auditory sensory faculty, etc., and the six sensory consciousnesses: the visual consciousness, the auditory consciousness, etc. They make up the eighteen constituents of perception.

Doha. A spiritual song spontaneously composed by a Vajrayana practitioner. It usually has nine syllables per line.

Dzogchen. (Skt. *mahasandhi*) Literally "the great perfection." The teachings beyond the vehicles of causation, first taught in the human world by the great Vidyadhara Garab Dorje.

Eight Kagyu Lineages. Phagmo Drupa, one of the four greater lineage founders, had eight main disciples who founded eight additional lineages: 1. The Drikhung Kagyu was founded by Drikhung Kyopa Jigten Sumgyi Gönpo. 2. The Drukpa Kagyu was founded by Drupchen Lingrepa Pema Dorje and his disciple Chöje Tsangpa Gyare Yeshe Dorje. 3. The Taklung Kagyu was founded by Taklung Thangpa Tashi Pal. 4. The Yasang Kagyu was founded by Zarawa Kalden Yeshe Senge and his disciple Yasang Chöje Chökyi Mönlam. 5. The Trophu Kagyu was founded by Rinpoche Gyatsa, and his disciple Trophu Lotsawa Champa Pal. 6. The Shuksep Kagyu was founded by Gyergom Tsultrim Senge. 7. Yelpa Kagyu was founded by Yelpa Drupthop Yeshe Tsekpa. 8. Martsang Kagyu was founded by Martsang Sherab Senge

Eight mental constructs or complexities are mental formulations that phenomena have such attributes as arising and ceasing, being singular or plural, coming and going, and being the same or being different.

Eight worldly concerns. (Tib. *jik ten chö gysh*) These keep one from the path; they are attachment to gain, attachment to pleasure, attachment to praise, attachment to fame, aversion to loss, aversion to pain, aversion to blame and aversion to a bad reputation.

Emptiness. (Tib. *tong pa nyi* Skt. *shunyata*) A central theme in Buddhism. It should not lead one to views of nihilism or the like, but is a term indicating the lack of any truly existing independent nature of any and all phenomena. Positively stated, phenomena do exist, but as mere

appearances, interdependent manifestations of mind with no limitation. It is not that it is just your mind, as mind is also free of any true existence. This frees one from a solipsist view. This is interpreted differently by the individual schools.

Empowerment. (Skt. *abhisheka*) The conferring of power or authorization to practice the Vajrayana teachings, the indispensable entrance door to tantric practice. To do a Vajrayana practice one must receive the empowerment from a qualified lama. One should also receive the practice instruction (Tib. *tri*) and the textual reading (Tib. *lung*).

Eternalism. The belief that there is a permanent and causeless creator of everything; in particular, that one's identity or consciousness has a concrete essence which is independent, everlasting and singular.

Experience and realization. (Tib. *myamtog*) An expression used for insight and progress on the path. "Experience" refers to temporary meditation experiences and "realization" to unchanging understanding of the nature of things.

Five paths. According to the sutras there are five paths: the path of accumulation, the path of application, the path of seeing/insight (attainment of the first bodhisattva level), the path of meditation and the path of no more learning (Buddhahood). The five paths cover the entire process from beginning dharma practice to complete enlightenment.

Five wisdoms. The dharmadhatu wisdom, mirror-like wisdom, wisdom of equality, discriminating wisdom and all-accomplishing wisdom. They should not be understood as separate but rather as different functions of one's enlightened essence.

Form realm. God realms of subtle form.

Formless realm. The abode of an unenlightened being who has practiced the four absorptions: infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothing whatsoever, and neither presence nor absence (of conception).

Four common foundations. These are the four thoughts that turn the mind toward dharma. They are reflection on precious human birth, impermanence and the inevitability of death, karma and its effects, and the pervasiveness of suffering in samsara.

Four empowerments. The empowerments of vase, secret, wisdom-knowledge and precious word.

Four extremes. (Tib. *tha shi*) Existence, non-existence, both and neither.

Four joys. (Tib. *dga' ba bzhi*) These are joy, supreme joy, transcendent joy, and co-emergent joy.

Four Kagyu Lineages. From Gampopa's disciple Phagmo Drupa, the Phagmo Kagyu; from Baram Dharma Wangchuk, the Baram Kagyu; from Dusum Khyenpa, (the first Gyalwang Karmapa), the Kamtsang Kagyu, and; Ghampo Tsultrim Nyingpo's disciple Tsondru Trakpa, the Tshalpa Kagyu. These four are known as the four greater or senior schools.

Four uncommon foundations. (Tib. *Ngöndro* and pronounced "*nundro*") Tibetan for preliminary practice. One usually begins the Vajrayana path by doing the four preliminary practices which involve about 100,000 refuge prayers and prostrations, 100,000 Vajrasattva mantras, 100,000 mandala offerings, and 100,000 guru yoga practices.

Four Yogas of Mahamudra. Four stages in Mahamudra practice: one-pointedness, simplicity, one taste and non-meditation.

Gampopa. (1079-1153 C.E.) One of the main lineage holders of the Kagyu lineage in Tibet. A student of Milarepa, he established the first Kagyu monastic monastery and is known also for writing the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation.*

Garuda. A mythical bird that hatches fully grown.

Guru. (Tib. *lama*) A teacher in the Tibetan tradition who has reached realization.

Guru yoga. A practice of devotion to the guru culminating in receiving his blessing and blending indivisibly with his mind. Also refers to the fourth practice of the preliminary practices of Ngöndro.

Habitual patterns. (Skt. *vasana.* Tib. *bakchak*) Patterns of conditional response that exist as traces or tendencies stored in the alaya-vijnana, the eighth consciousness sometimes called the store-house or all-base consciousness. So called because it is a repository of all karmically conditioned patterns. All dualistic or ego-oriented experiences leave a residue, which is stored in the alaya-vijnana until a later time when some conscious occurrence

activates the habitual pattern. The pattern then generates a response in the form of a perception or an action. This response leaves its own karmic residue, stored again in the unconscious repository, and the cycle continues. The explanation of this system is a central teaching of the Chittamatrin tradition of Mahayana Buddhism.

Hevajra. This is the "mother tantra" of the Anuttarayoga tantra, which is the highest of the four yogas. Hevajra is said to be an exclamation of joy. Hevajra transforms sense pleasures into joy through the realization of the identity of form and emptiness. Hevajra is depicted in two, four, six, twelve, and sixteen-armed forms, dancing in union with his consort, usually Nairatmya.

Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye. A great non-sectarian master of the nineteenth century and author of more than one hundred volumes of books.

Jnana. (Tib. *yeshe*) Enlightened wisdom that is beyond dualistic thought.

Kagyu. (Tib.) *Ka* means oral and *gyu* means lineage; the lineage of oral transmission. One of the four major schools of Buddhism in Tibet. It was founded in Tibet by Marpa and is headed by His Holiness Karmapa. The other three are the Nyingma, the Sakya and the Gelugpa schools.

Karma Kagyu. (Tib.) One of the eight schools of the Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism which is headed by His Holiness Karmapa.

Karmapa. The name means Buddha activities. The Karmapas are the head of the Kagyu school of Buddhism and were the first to implement the tradition of incarnate lamas. Karmapas are thought to be an emanation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.

Karmic latencies or imprints. (Skt. *vasana*, Tib. *bakchag*) Every action that a person does has an imprint which is stored in the eighth consciousness. These latencies express themselves later by leaving the eighth consciousness and entering the sixth consciousness upon being stimulated by external experience.

Kayas, three. There are three bodies of the Buddha: the nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya and dharmakaya. The dharmakaya, also called the "truth body," is the complete enlightenment or the complete wisdom of the Buddha that is unoriginated wisdom beyond form and manifests in the

sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya. The sambhogakaya, also called the "enjoyment body," manifests only to bodhisattvas. The nirmanakaya, also called the "emanation body," manifests in the world and in this context manifests as the Shakyamuni Buddha. The fourth kaya is the svabhavikakaya, which is the "essence body," the unity of the other three.

King Indrabhuti. An Indian king during the time of the Buddha who become an accomplished master. He symbolizes the person of the highest caliber who can use sense pleasures as the path of practice.

Klesha. (Tib. *nyön mong*) Also called the "disturbing emotions," these are the emotional afflictions or obscurations (in contrast to intellectual obscurations) that disturb the clarity of perception. These are also translated as "poisons." They include any emotion that disturbs or distorts consciousness. The three main kleshas are desire, anger and ignorance. The five kleshas are the three above plus pride and envy/jealousy.

Lama. (Skt. *guru*) *La* means nobody above himself or herself in spiritual experience and *ma* means expressing compassion like a mother. Thus the union of wisdom and compassion, feminine and masculine qualities. Lama is also a title given to a practitioner who has completed some extended training.

Lineage gurus. The lineage gurus are the gurus of the line of transmission of what we study and practice. These transmissions date from the teachings of the Buddha himself. All of the line of gurus in that transmission from the Buddha, who first gave the teachings, up until the present time constitute what we call the lineage gurus.

Lotsawa. Sanskrit for "translator."

Lower realm. The three lower realms are birth as a hell being, hungry ghost and animal.

Luminosity. (Tib. *selwa*) In the third turning of the wheel of dharma, the Buddha taught that everything is void, but this voidness is not completely empty because it has luminosity. Luminosity or clarity allows all phenomena to appear and is a characteristic of and inseparable from emptiness (Skt. *shunyata*).

Luminosity. (Tib. *osel*) Literally "free from the darkness of unknowing and

endowed with the ability to cognize." The two aspects are "empty luminosity," like a clear open sky; and "manifest luminosity," such as colored light images, and so forth. Luminosity is the uncompounded nature present throughout all of samsara and nirvana.

Madhyamaka. The most influential of the four schools of Indian Buddhism founded by Nagarjuna in the second century C.E. The name comes from the Sanskrit word meaning "the Middle-way" meaning that it is the middle way between eternalism and nihilism. The main postulate of this school is that all phenomena – both internal mental events and external physical objects – are empty of any true nature. The school uses extensive rational reasoning to establish the emptiness of phenomena. This school does, however, hold that phenomena do exist on the conventional or relative level of reality.

Mahamudra. (Tib. *cha ja chen po*) Literally means "great seal" or "great symbol," meaning that all phenomena are sealed by the primordially perfect true nature. This form of meditation is traced back to Saraha (tenth century) and was passed down in the Kagyu school through Marpa. This meditative transmission emphasizes perceiving mind directly rather than through rational analysis. It also refers to the experience of the practitioner where one attains the union of emptiness and luminosity and also perceives the non-duality of the phenomenal world and emptiness; also the name of Kagyupa lineage.

Mahapandita. Maha means great and *pandita* Buddhist scholar.

Mahasiddha. A practitioner who has a great deal of realization. *Maha* means great and *siddha* refers to an accomplished practitioner. These were particularly Vajrayana practitioners who lived in India between the eight and twelfth century and practiced tantra. The biography of some of the most famous is found in *The Eighty-four Mahasiddhas.*

Mahayana. (Tib. *tek pa chen po*) Literally, the "Great Vehicle." These are the teachings of the second turning of the wheel of dharma, which emphasize shunyata (see *shunyata*), compassion and universal Buddha nature. The purpose of enlightenment is to liberate all sentient beings from suffering as well as oneself. Mahayana schools of philosophy appeared several

hundred years after the Buddha's death, although the tradition is traced to teachings he gave at Rajgriha, or Vulture Peak Mountain.

Maitripa—was a guru of Marpa, the Tibetan forefather of the Kagyu lineage. Thus it is through Maitripa that Maitreya and Asanga's crucial work on Buddha nature, the *Uttaratantrashastra* (*Anuttara*), became widely followed in Tibet. It is said that he had been a student of Naropa when the latter was head of Nalanda monastic university. Maitripa also transmitted to Marpa the esoteric aspect of Buddha nature embodied in the Mahamudra teachings, which treat the topic of mind in great detail and provide a wide range of progressive, highly refined meditations. Maitripa was brought to enlightenment through Mahamudra under his guru Savari, who received the complete teachings of Mahamudra from Nagarjuna, who received them from Sahara, whom Marpa encountered in his dream state.

Mantra. (Tib. *ngags*) 1) A synonym for Vajrayana. 2) A particular combination of sounds symbolizing the nature of a deity, for example OM MANI PEME HUNG. These are invocations to various meditation deities which are recited in Sanskrit. These Sanskrit syllables, representing various energies, are repeated in different Vajrayana practices.

Mara. Difficulties encountered by the practitioner. The Tibetan word means heavy or thick. In Buddhism mara symbolizes the passions that overwhelm human beings as well as everything that hinders the arising of wholesome roots and progress on the path to enlightenment. There are four kinds: *skandha-mara*, which is incorrect view of self; *klesha-mara*, which is being overpowered by negative emotions; *matyu-mara*, which is death and interrupts spiritual practice; and *devaputra-mara*, which is becoming stuck in the bliss that comes from meditation.

Marpa. (1012-1097 C.E.) Marpa was known for being a Tibetan who made three trips to India and brought back many tantric texts, including the Six Yogas of Naropa, the Guyhasamaja, and the Chakrasamvara practices. His root teacher was Tilopa, the founder of the Kagyu lineage and the teacher of Naropa. Marpa initiated and founded the Kagyu lineage in Tibet.

Mental consciousness. The sixth consciousness is the faculty of thinking which produces thoughts based upon the experiences of the five sense-consciousnesses or its own previous content. (see *eight consciousnesses*).

Mental factors. Mental factors are contrasted to mind in that they are more long-term propensities of mind including eleven virtuous factors such as faith, detachment and equanimity; the six root defilements such as desire, anger and pride; the twenty secondary defilements such as resentment, dishonesty and harmfulness.

Middle-way or Madhyamaka school. A philosophical school founded by Nagarjuna and based on the Prajnaparamita sutras of emptiness.

Milarepa. (1040-1123 C.E.) Milarepa was a student of Marpa who attained enlightenment in one lifetime. *Mila,* named by the deities and *repa* means white cotton. His student Gampopa established the (*Dakpo*) Kagyu lineage in Tibet.

Mind-only school. Also called Chittamatra school. This is one of the major schools in the Mahayana tradition founded in the fourth century by Asanga that emphasized everything is mental events.

Mudra. In this book it is a "hand seal" or gesture that is performed in specific tantric rituals to symbolize certain aspects of the practice being done. Also can mean spiritual consort, or the "bodily form" of a deity.

Nadi. The channels in the vajra body through which the winds flow.

Nagarjuna. An Indian master of philosophy. Founder of the Madhyamaka school and author of the *Knowledge of the Middle Way* and other important works. (second - third century)

Naropa. (956-1040 C.E.) An Indian master best known for transmitting many Vajrayana teachings to Marpa who took these back to Tibet before the Moslem invasion of India.

Nihilism. (Tib. *chad lta*) Literally, "the view of discontinuance." The extreme view of nothingness: no rebirth or karmic effects, and the non-existence of a mind after death.

Nirmanakaya. (Tib. *tulku*) There are three bodies of the Buddha; the nirmanakaya or "emanation body" manifests in the world and in this context manifests as the Shakyamuni Buddha. (see *kayas, three.)*

Nirvana. Literally, "extinguished." Individuals live in samsara and with spiritual practice can attain a state of liberation in which all false ideas and conflicting emotions have been extinguished. This is called nirvana. The nirvana of a Hinayana practitioner is freedom from cyclic existence as an arhat. The nirvana of a Mahayana practitioner is Buddhahood, free from extremes of dwelling in either samsara or the perfect peace of an arhat.

Sometimes it is categorized as three types: nirvana of naturalness, which is ground nirvana; nirvana of cessation, which is path nirvana; and non-abiding nirvana, which is the reward or fruition nirvana.

Non-distraction. (Tib. *yeng me*) Not straying from the continuity of the practice.

Non-fabrication. (Tib. *zo me*) The important key point in meditation of Mahamudra and Dzogchen; that innate wakefulness is not created through intellectual effort.

Non-meditation. (Tib. *gom me*) The state of not holding on to an object meditated upon nor a subject who meditates. Also refers to the fourth stage of Mahamudra in which nothing further needs to be meditated upon or cultivated.

Non-thought. (Tib. *mi tog*) A state in which conceptual thinking is absent.

Obscurations. There are two categories of obscuration or defilement that cover one's Buddha nature: the defilement of disturbing emotions (see *afflictive obscurations*); and the defilement of latent tendencies sometimes called the obscuration of dualistic perception, or the intellectual/cognitive obscurations (see *cognitive obscurations*). The first category prevents sentient beings from freeing themselves from samsara, while the second prevents them from gaining accurate knowledge and realizing truth.

Occurrence. The period when thoughts are arising in the mind. Compare with "stillness."

One-pointedness. The first stage in the practice of Mahamudra.

One taste. The third stage in the practice of Mahamudra.

Ordinary Mind. (Tib. *tamal kyi shepa*) There is no need to do anything to your present wakefulness at the moment of recognizing; it is already as

it is. That is the true meaning of naked ordinary mind, a famous term in Tibetan. It means not tampered with. There is no "thing" which needs to be accepted or rejected; it is simply as it is. The term 'ordinary mind' is the most immediate and accurate term to describe the nature of mind. No matter what terminology is being utilized within the Middle-way, Mahamudra or Dzogchen, naked ordinary mind is the simplest term.

Pandita. A great scholar.

Path of Liberation. The path of Mahamudra practice.

Path of Means. Refers to the Six Yogas of Naropa as well as to the stages of creation and completion with attributes.

Prana. Life supporting energy. The "winds" or energy-currents of the vajra body.

Prajna. (Tib. *she rab*) In Sanskrit it means "perfect knowledge" and can mean wisdom, understanding or discrimination. Usually it means the wisdom of seeing things from a high (i.e., non-dualistic) point of view.

Prajnaparamita. Transcendent perfect knowledge. The Tibetan literally means, "gone to the other side" or "gone beyond" as expressed in the Prajnaparamita mantra, "Om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha." The realization of emptiness in the *Prajnaparamita Hridaya* or *Heart Sutra,* made possible by the extraordinarily profound dharma of the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha in the world and the practices that came from it, such as the Vajrayana tantras, which make use of visualization and the control of subtle physical energies.

Prajnaparamita sutras. Used to refer to a collection of about 40 Mahayana sutras that all deal with the realization of prajna.

Pure realm. Realms created by Buddhas which are totally free from suffering and dharma there can be received directly. These realms are presided over by various Buddhas such as Amitabha, Avalokiteshvara, and Maitreya who presides over Tushita.

Rangjung Dorje. (1284-1339 C.E.) The Third Karmapa, especially well known for writing a series of texts widely used in the Kagyu school.

Rangtong school. The Madhyamaka or Middle-way is divided into two major

schools; Rangtong (empty of self) and Shentong (empty of other). Rangtong is from the second turning of the wheel of dharma and teaches that reality is empty of self and beyond concepts.

Recognition. In this context it means "recognizing the nature of mind."

Red element. The residual seed essence of the mother's ovum, obtained at conception, which remains present in the centre of the body below the navel for the duration of a person's life.

Relative truth. (Tib. *kunsop*) There are two truths: relative and absolute or ultimate truth. Relative truth is the perception of an ordinary (unenlightened) being who sees the world with all his or her projections based on the false belief in "I" and "other."

Rigpa. The primordial, non-dual awareness in the Dzogchen teachings.

Rinpoche. Literally, "very precious" and is used as a term of respect for a Tibetan guru.

Root lama. A practitioner of Vajrayana can have several types of root guru: the vajra master who confers empowerment, who bestows reading transmission, or who explains the meaning of the tantras. The ultimate root guru is the master who gives the "pointing out instructions" so that one recognizes the nature of mind.

Sakya Pandita. A hereditary head of the Sakya lineage. A great scholar (1181-1251 C.E.)

Samadhi. A state of meditation that is non-dualistic. There is an absence of discrimination between self and other. Also called meditative absorption or one-pointed meditation, this is the highest form of meditation.

Samaya. The vows or commitments made in the Vajrayana to a teacher or to a practice. Many details exist but essentially it consists of outwardly, maintaining a harmonious relationship with the vajra master and one's dharma friends and inwardly, not straying from the continuity of the practice.

Sambhogakaya. There are three bodies of the Buddha, the sambhogakaya, also called the "enjoyment body," is a realm of the dharmakaya that only manifests to bodhisattvas (see *kayas, three*).

Samsara. "Cyclic existence." The conditioned existence of ordinary life in which

suffering occurs because one still possesses attachment, aggression and ignorance. It is contrasted to nirvana. Through the force of karma motivated by ignorance, desire and anger one is forced to take on the impure aggregates and circle the wheel of existence until liberation.

Sentient beings. With consciousness; an animated being as opposed to an inanimate object. All beings with consciousness or mind who have not attained the liberation of Buddhahood. This includes those individuals caught in the sufferings of samsara as well as those who have attained the levels of a bodhisattva.

Shamatha. (Tib. *shinay*) See tranquility meditation.

Shamatha with support. The practice of calming the mind while using an object of concentration, material or mental, or simply the breath.

Shamatha without support. The act of calming the mind without any particular object, resting undistractedly. This practice serves as a prelude for Mahamudra and should not be mistaken for the ultimate result.

Shentong school. The Madhyamaka or Middle-way is divided into two major schools, Rangtong (empty of self) and Shentong (empty of other). Shentong is from the third turning of the wheel of dharma and explains that ultimate reality is emptiness and luminosity inseparable.

Shunyata. See *emptiness.*

Siddha. An accomplished Buddhist practitioner.

Siddhi. "Accomplishment." The spiritual accomplishments of accomplished practitioners. Usually refers to the "supreme siddhi" of complete enlightenment, but can also mean the "common siddhis," eight mundane accomplishments.

Simplicity. 1) The absence of creating mental constructs or conceptual formations about the nature of things. 2) The second stage in the practice of Mahamudra.

Six Dharmas (Yogas) of Naropa. These six special yogic practices were transmitted from Naropa to Marpa and consist of the subtle heat practice, the illusory body practice, the dream yoga practice, the luminosity practice, the ejection of consciousness practice and the bardo practice.

Six realms. The realms of the six classes of beings: gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings. These are the possible types of births for beings in samsara and are: the god realm in which gods have great pride, the jealous god realm in which the jealous gods try to maintain what they have, the human realm which is the best realm because one has the possibility of achieving enlightenment, the animal realm characterized by stupidity, the hungry ghost realm characterized by great craving, and the hell realm characterized by aggression.

Spiritual song. See *doha.*

Stillness. Absence of thought activity and disturbing emotions, but with subtle fixation on this stillness.

Subtle channels. (Skt. *nadi,* Tib. *tsa*) These refer to the subtle channels which are not anatomical ones but ones in which psychic energies or "winds" (Skt. *prana,* Tib. *lung*) travel.

Subtle heat. (Tib. *tummo*) An advanced Vajrayana practice for combining bliss and emptiness producing heat as a by product.

Sugata. An epithet for the Buddha.

Sugatagarbha. (Tib. *de sheg nying po*) Buddha nature or that enlightened essence present in all beings that allows them to have the capacity to achieve enlightenment. It is closely related to tathagatagarbha.

Supreme siddhi. Another word for enlightenment.

Sutra. Sometimes "sutra" is used to cover all of the teachings given by the Buddha himself. But correctly it means one of the three sections of the dharma called the Tripitaka or Three Baskets. In the Tripitaka there are the Sutras, the Vinaya and the Abhidharma. The sutras are mainly concerned with meditation or samadhi; the Abhidharma is mainly concerned with the development of wisdom and understanding; and the Vinaya is mainly concerned with discipline and the rules of morality and conduct.

Sutra Mahamudra. The Mahamudra system based on the Prajnaparamita scriptures and emphasizing Shamatha, Vipashyana and the progressive journey through the five paths and ten bhumis.

Svabhavikakaya. The "essence body." Sometimes counted as the fourth kaya, the unity of the first three.

Tantra. Literally, tantra means "continuity," and in Buddhism it refers to two specific things: the texts (resultant texts, or those that take the result as the path) that describe the practices leading from ignorance to enlightenment, including commentaries by tantric masters; and the way to enlightenment itself, encompassing the ground, path and fruition. One can divide Buddhism into the sutra tradition and the tantra tradition. The sutra tradition primarily involves the academic study of the Mahayana texts and the tantric path primarily involves practicing the Vajrayana practices. The tantras are primarily the texts of the Vajrayana practices.

Tantra Mahamudra. The same as mantra Mahamudra. The Mahamudra practice connected to the Six Yogas of Naropa.

Tathagatagarbha. (Tib. *deshin sheg pai nying po*) This is the seed or essence of tathata (suchness) and is also called Buddha essence or enlightened essence.

Terton. (Tib.) A master in the Tibetan tradition who discovers treasures (*terma*) which are teachings concealed by great masters of the past.

Terma. (Tib.) Literally, hidden treasure. Works which were hidden by great bodhisattvas and later rediscovered. They may be actual physical texts or they may come from "the sky" as transmissions from the sambhogakaya.

Three realms. These are three categories of samsara. The desire realm includes existences where beings are born with solid bodies due to their karma, ranging from the deva paradises to the hell realms. The form realm is where beings are born due to the power of meditation, and their bodies are of subtle form in this realm. These are the meditation paradises. The formless realm is where beings due to their meditation (samadhi) have entered a state of meditation after death and the processes of thought and perception have ceased.

Three roots. Guru, yidam and dakini. Guru is the root of blessings, yidam of accomplishment and dakini of activity.

Three sufferings. These are the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change, and pervasive suffering (meaning the inherent suffering in all of samsara).

Three vehicles. Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana.

Tilopa. (928-1009 C.E.) One of the eighty-four mahasiddhas who became the guru of Naropa who transmitted his teachings to the Kagyu lineage in Tibet.

Tranquility meditation. (Tib. *Shinay*, Skt. *Shamatha*) One of the two main types of meditation, calm abiding, the meditative practice of calming the mind in order to rest free from the disturbance of thought activity; the other is insight or Vipashyana.

Tulku. (Tib. Skt. *nirmanakaya*) The Tibetan means "Multiple body." It is the term used for describing the emanation body of an enlightened being or bodhisattva. The syllable *tul* has both direct and indirect meanings. The direct meaning is "multiple" and the indirect meaning, "manifestation," which refers to the sending out of compassion. It is the illusory emanation of the dharmakaya as a nirmanakaya form. *Ku* means body. In Tibet, however, it came to mean the emanation of an advanced Buddhist master who chooses to continue to incarnate for the benefit of others.

Tummo. (Tib.) An advanced Vajrayana practice for combining bliss and emptiness which produces heat as a by product. This is one of the Six Yogas of Naropa.

Two accumulations. The accumulation of merit with concepts and the accumulation of wisdom beyond concepts.

Vajra. (Tib. *dorje*) Usually translated "diamond like." This may be an implement held in the hand during certain Vajrayana ceremonies, or it can refer to a quality which is so pure and so enduring that it is like a diamond.

Vajradhara. (Tib. *Dorje Chang*) "Holder of the vajra." *Vajra* means indestructible and *dhara* means holding, embracing or inseparable. The central figure in the Kagyu refuge tree, and indicating the transmission of the close lineage of the Mahamudra teachings to Tilopa. Vajradhara symbolizes the primordial wisdom of the dharmakaya and wears the ornaments of the sambhogakaya Buddha, symbolizing its richness.

Vajrapani. A major bodhisattva said to be lord of the mantra and a major protector of Tibetan Buddhism.

Vajrasattva. The Buddha of purification. Vajrasattva practice is part of the four preliminary practices. A sambhogakaya Buddha who embodies all the five families. He is also a major source of purification practices.

Vajravarahi. A dakini who is the consort of Chakrasamvara. She is the main yidam of the Kagyu lineage and the embodiment of wisdom.

Vajrayana. Literally, "diamond-like" or "indestructible capacity." *Vajra* here refers to method, so the method yana. There are three major traditions of Buddhism (Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana). The Vajrayana is based on the tantras and emphasizes the clarity aspect of phenomena. A practitioner of the method of taking the result as the path.

View, meditation and action. The philosophical orientation, the act of growing accustomed to that – usually in sitting practice – and the implementation of that insight during the activities of daily life. Each of the three vehicles has its particular definition of view, meditation and action.

Vipashyana meditation. Sanskrit for "insight meditation." This meditation develops insight into the nature of reality (Skt. *dharmata*). One of the two main aspects of meditation practice, the other being Shamatha.

Wangchuk Dorje. (1556-1603 C.E.) The Ninth Karmapa.

Wisdom of nature of phenomena. This is transcendent knowledge (jnana) of the true nature of reality, not as it appears to individuals in samsara.

Wisdom of multiplicity or variety. This is the transcendent knowledge (jnana) of the variety of phenomena.

Wheel of dharma. (Skt. *dharmachakra*) The Buddha's teachings correspond to three levels which very briefly are: the first turning was the teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the teaching of the egolessness of person; the second turning was the teachings on emptiness and the emptiness of phenomena; the third turning was the teachings on luminosity and Buddha nature.

White element. The residual seed essence of the father's sperm, obtained at conception, which remains present in the centre of the body at the very top of the head for the duration of a person's life.

Yana. Means capacity. There are three yanas, narrow, (Hinayana) great (Mahayana) and indestructible (Vajrayana).

Yidam. (Tib.) *Yi* means mind and *dam* means pure, or *yi* means your mind and *dam* means inseparable. The yidam represents the practitioner's awakened nature or pure appearance. A tantric deity that embodies qualities of Buddhahood and is practiced in the Vajrayana. Also called a tutelary deity.

Yidam meditation. Yidam meditation is the Vajrayana practice that uses the visualization of a yidam.

Yoga. "Natural condition." A person who practices this is called a *yogi*, characterized by leaving everything natural, just as it is, e.g. not washing or cutting your hair and nails etc. A female practitioner is called a *yogini*.

Yoga tantra. Literally, "union tantra" and refers to a tantra that places emphasis on internal meditations.

Yogi. Tantric practitioner.

Yogini. Female tantric practitioner.

Glossary of Tibetan Terms

Pronounced	Spelled	Meaning
bakchag	bag chags	latencies
chakgya chenpo	phyag rgya chan po	Mahamudra
chö	chos	dharma
dang	gdangs	brilliance
dantar gyi shepa	da lta'i shes pa	mind of nowness
deshin skekpai nying po	de bzhin gsheg pai' snying po	tathagatagarbha
dondam	don dam pai bden pa	ultimate truth
dorje	rdo rje	vajra
Dorje Chang	rdo rje chang	Vajradhara
Dzogchen	rdzogs chen	Dzogchen
golsa sum	gol sa gsum	Three errors
gom me	sgom med	non-meditation
kagyu	bka' 'gyur	Kagyu
kunzhi namshe	kun gzhi' rnam shes	alaya consciousness
kunzop	kun rdzob	relative truth
lhen chig	lhan chig	co-emergent
long chö dzok pay ku	longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku	sambhogakaya
lotsawa	lo tsa ba	translator
lung	rlung	prana
lung	lung	reading instruction
marigpa	ma rig pa	bewilderment
mi tog	mi rtog	non-thought
mon nong	nyon mongs	disturbing emotion

nam	nyams	temporary experiences
namshe	rnam par shes pa	consciousness
ne lug	gnas lugs	natural state
ngags	ngak	mantra
Ngöndro	sngon 'gro	preliminaries
norbu sum	nor bu gsum	three gems
nyam tog	nyams rtogs	experience and realization
ösel	'od gsal	clear light
rang gsel	rang gsal	self-illuminating
rang rig rang sal	rang rig	self-knowing
rigpa nyingpo	rig pa snying po can	heart essence of awareness
rigpa	rig pa	awareness
kyen sum	rkyen gsum	three conditions
nalma	rnal ma	natural state
salwa	gsal ba	luminosity
sang gye yeshe	sangs rgyas ye shes	awakened awareness
sherab	shes rab	prajna
shi	gshis	true nature
shinay	zhi gnas	tranquility meditation
soma	so ma	freshness
shorba	shor sa	four deviations
thamal gyi shepa	tha mal gyi shes pa	ordinary mind
tise	tshig	seal
togyal	thod rgal	leaping over
tri	khrid	practice instruction
trul lug	'khrul lug	confused aspect
tsal	rtsal	dynamic energy
tulku	sprul sku	emanation body
tummo	gtum mo	subtle heat

yeng me	yengs med	non-distraction
yeshe	ye shes	primordial wisdom
Yidam	yi dam	med deity
ying	dbyings	dhatu space
zo me	bzo med	non-fabrication
zung jug	zung 'jug	unity

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Rain of Wisdom, translated by Nalanda Translation Committee. Boulder: Shambhala, 1980. A collection of the spiritual songs of the Kagyu masters.

Jamgon Kongtrul, Lodro Thaye

The five treasuries are given in Endnote 1.

Keith Dowman

Masters of Mahamudra (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1985). Keith Dowman translated a work by Abhayadatta who collected the stories of eighty-four mahasiddhas. It should be noted that there were many more mahasiddhas than eight-four.

Nagarjuna

Knowledge of the Middle Way (Skt Mula-madhyama-kakakarika, Tib. dbu ma rtsa ba'i shes rab) This work has been translated several times. A new translation is *Mulamadhyamakakarika of Nagarjuna* by David Kalupahana, India, Motilal Banarsidass.

Shantideva

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Tashi Namgyal

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Uttara Tantra by Asanga and Maitreya (Skt. *ratnagotravibhaga,* Tib. *rgyud bla ma,* Pron. "gyu lama") This text was written by Asanga who received the transmission from the bodhisattva Maitreya in Sanskrit in about the fourth century. The complete Tibetan text has been translated by Obermiller (E. Obermiller, Acta Orientalia, IX, 1931, pp. 81-306) and has been reprinted more recently in a book edited by H. S. Prasad (*The Uttaratantra of Maitreya.* Delhi, India: Sri Satguru Publications, 1991). Thrangu Rinpoche has also written a commentary on this text called *The Uttara Tantra: A Treatise on Buddha Nature.* Boulder, Colorado: Namo Buddha Publications, 1994. This book also includes a translation of the 404 root verses and Rinpoche's commentary.

The Heart Sutra. (Skt. *Prajnaparamita-hridaya-sutra,* Tib. *shes rab snying po'i mdo,* Pron. "sherab nyinpo dho") *Translated by Conze (1959) as Hridya-mahayana-sutra.* One of the most important Mahayana sutras which is often chanted each morning in dharma centers. It is a short sutra of the Buddha of several hundred words summarizing the Prajnaparamita teaching on the meditation on emptiness

The Heart Sutra. (Skt. *Maha-prajnaparamita-mitahriidaya sutra,* Tib. *bcom ldan 'das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i snying po'i mdo*). This is a sutra by the Buddha which is a condensation of the Prajnaparamita sutra. This sutra is chanted daily in almost all Mahayana Buddhist centers.

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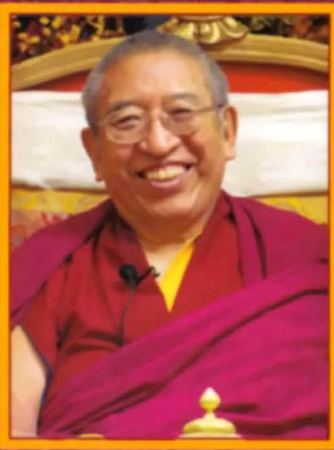


Care of Dharma Books

Dharma books contain the teachings of the Buddha. They have the power to protect against lower rebirth and to point the way to liberation. Therefore, they should be treated with respect.

These considerations may be also kept in mind for Dharma artwork, as well as the written teachings and artwork of other religions.

A COMMENTARY ON THE SONG OF LODRO THAYE



The Kagyu lineage is commonly known as the practice lineage, as it is practice above all else that is emphasized. However, practice can only proceed correctly if one has a correct understanding of the view. The path and view of the Kagyu lineage is Mahamudra, which is the very essence and pith of all the teachings of Lord Buddha.

Texts on Mahamudra were often written by highly accomplished siddhas who would explain their realization of years and years of Mahamudra meditation in brief spiritual songs called dohas. These dohas, often only a few dozen lines long, are still sung by lamas today. They often contain the most profound instructions in metaphors of great beauty derived from simple meditative experience.

This Song of Lodro Thaye is just such a doha and covers the entire path of Mahamudra in less than 300 lines of verse. However, the spiritual song is condensed in meaning so one needs someone accomplished in Mahamudra meditation to explain the meaning of this great work. Such a person is Thrangu Rinpoche who not only was asked to establish the curriculum of the Kagyu lineage after the Tibetans were forced into exile in 1959, but also taught the four major regents of the lineage including Jamgon Kongtrul's reincarnation.

Cover picture of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye courtesy of Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang

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